

'HOPE HAS NOT DIED IN EGYPT'

Five years ago protests in Tunisia triggered revolutions. Sameh Naguib spoke to Judith Orr about the lessons >>pages 14&15

Billions made from care

Raymie Kiernan looks at the big firms that stand behind the crisis in social care >>pages 10&11



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AFTER THE FLOODS CRISIS FIREFIGHTERS SLAM CUTS...



SACK THE TORIES NOT US

by **SIMON HICKMAN**
Manchester firefighter

I WAS responding to the floods in Greater Manchester on Boxing Day, pumping out water and getting people out of their homes.

The whole brigade was overstretched. We struggled, and just about muddled through.

But Tory cuts mean the loss of 400 jobs here. It's scary to think what that will mean.

Climate change will bring more extreme weather. We'll face it at both ends—with more fires during heatwaves and more floods.

How well we respond really comes down to how many personnel we have.

The Tories say the floods came as a surprise and they're doing all they can. It's nonsense.

They knew it was coming. They didn't do all they could then

and they aren't now.

Instead they've made massive cuts while subsidising landowners who strip the land so it can't retain water.

We don't want Cameron's words. We need proper funding for public services.

More on floods
>>pages 4&5

Simon Hickman

LABOUR PARTY

Labour right seeks to block a fight over cuts and war

LABOUR leader Jeremy Corbyn has come under attack over a reshuffle of his shadow cabinet.

The attacks aim to undermine his leadership and blackmail the Labour left.

The left's desire for unity with the right is holding it back from opposing austerity and war.

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RACISM



Muslims speak out against Islamophobia

DAVID CAMERON used his New Year's message to ramp up the racist assault on Muslims.

One Muslim family was stopped boarding a flight to Disneyland last month.

Father Mohammed Mahmood Tariq told Socialist Worker, "We've got no freedom here."

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WAR

British farce in Syria won't ward off Isis threat

DAVID CAMERON claimed Britain had to join airstrikes to bring peace to Syria and make Britain safe from Isis.

But now Isis is directly threatening Britain because it joined the war. Ordinary Syrians are no safer. The war will only bring more violence.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'He owned only a pair of Hunter green wellies. And why shouldn't he? Many of us do'

Simon Heffer in the Daily Telegraph defends David Cameron's right to posh wellies

'Tainted New Year Honours'

A Daily Mail headline on the awards. Daily Mail editor Paul Dacre has still not been knighted

'Super-annuated Trotskyist oppositionists'

Former Labour minister Kim Howells on the "new politics" around Jeremy Corbyn

'Nuts on one wheel can come loose, but not on all four'

Nigel Farage says he survived an assassination attempt

'I have to say what I have to say. And you know what I have to say? There's a problem. We have to find out what the problem is.'

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump defends his call for a ban on Muslims entering the US



Expenses for lazy Lords and honours for Tory cronies

HUNDREDS OF thousands of pounds in allowances were paid during 2015 to peers who went through the year without ever contributing in the House of Lords.

Some 117 vermin in ermine who are still listed as members of the House of Lords never spoke in the main Lords chamber in the past year. That's one in seven of the total.

At least 49 signed the register and claimed the £300 daily attendance allowance. Some pocketed an average of more than £4,000 a month.

Lord Taylor of Blackburn claimed £29,100 in tax free allowances during six months in 2015, although he did not speak.

Lord Borrie, former head of the Advertising



LORD FELDMAN, David Cameron and Sir Lynton Crosby

Standards Authority, claimed £21,300 in six months, although he did not speak.

Lord Davies of Coity, the former head of the shopworkers' union Usdaw, claimed £14,700 in six months, plus

more than £7,000 towards the cost of travelling. He did not speak.

Lord Hanningfield was jailed in 2011 for fiddling his expenses and suspended in 2014 for claiming an

allowance after doing no work. After his suspension ended in May, he received £3,600 in allowances in three months.

SOME 30 Tory party members or supporters received awards in the New Year honours list.

Political strategist Lynton Crosby was knighted for political service.

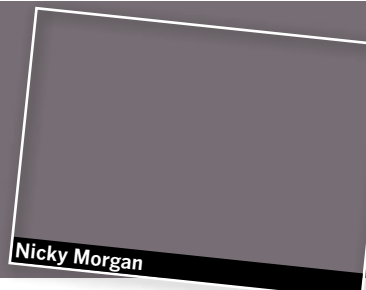
It follows his short stint working for the Conservative Party earlier this year—for which he was paid £500,000.

Jacqueline Gold, chief executive of Ann Summers, has been appointed CBE for services to entrepreneurialism. She is a serial donor to the Tories. Another Tory to receive a knighthood is Henry Bellingham, an Old Etonian who has been MP for North West Norfolk for 32 years.

NICKY MORGAN has announced that all year six pupils will be expected to know their times tables up to 12x12.

But the education secretary refused to answer any times tables questions as people would focus on any wrong answers. And it turns out children already have to learn their times tables.

But Morgan hopes to use maths tests to target schools for privatisation.



Nicky Morgan

NO 10 was sent so many emails about David Cameron and the "PigGate" story it has refused Freedom of Information requests on it.

Downing Street claimed the cost of releasing email correspondence on it would cost too much due to the sheer volume of emails it received.

The e-cig industry coughs up for MP

RUGBY TORY MP Mark Pawsey used prime minister's questions to solicit an endorsement of e-cigarettes from David Cameron. After he received £1,650 in hospitality from a e-cigarettes manufacturer.

Pawsey asked, "Will the prime minister join me in highlighting the role that e-cigarettes can play in

helping people give up tobacco for good?"

Cameron responded, "It is promising to see that a million people have used e-cigarettes."

Pawsey is the chair of a pro-vaping parliamentary group established in late 2014. The group's contact is listed as lobbyist Ian Gregory of ABZED Communications.

Gregory is also listed, via another lobbying outfit, as a press contact for E-Lites e-cigarettes.

The E-Lites brand was acquired by Japan Tobacco in 2014. The Japan Tobacco that treated Pawsey to £1,650 in sporting hospitality at the end of September.



Mark Pawsey

Cleveland cops spy on own Asian officers

TROUBLEMAKER regular Cleveland constabulary faces claims that it secretly obtained details from confidential emails between Asian officers and solicitors.

The then chief constable was sacked in 2012 for gross misconduct. In November an employment tribunal exposed a racist campaign that targeted an Asian firearms officer.

The ordeal endured by Nadeem Saddique highlighted racist attitudes

that the force's own disciplinary unit failed to investigate properly, the tribunal found. Fellow officers had described him as "just a Paki".

PC Saddique had written emails in 2012 to a senior ethnic minority officer after a white colleague sported an English Defence League sticker on the holster of his weapon. The sticker reputedly included the phrase, "Crusades against Muslims, tell me you're a Muslim and I'll shoot you."



Royals slum it with duvets

IT'S GOOD to hear that the Royal family is finally moving with the times. "Well-placed sources" have revealed that Windsor Castle has ditched sheets and eiderdowns in its many guest bedrooms.

Duvets have been brought in instead. Not everyone is happy.

One royal employee said using duvets "seems a little like something a hotel chain might do".

They added, "They'll be putting chocolates on the pillows next." The source went on, "It's rather old fashioned but many believe using sheets, blankets and eiderdowns is one of those traditions that should be retained."



45,000

number of meals thrown away in the Houses of Parliament last year

75,000

number of children who go to bed hungry in London each night according to the Trussell Trust

Murdoch holds Tory party

DAVID CAMERON was joined by George Osborne at Rupert Murdoch's Christmas house party. In fact, half the Conservative cabinet went to toast the media magnate.

John Whittingdale, the culture secretary whose job it is to regulate the media industry, popped in.

As did Priti Patel, the employment minister.

Rebekah Brooks was the most senior News Corp UK executive in attendance.

It is understood to be her first chance to raise a glass with the prime minister since being reappointed as chief executive in September.

Nice everyone's back together.

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David Cameron steps up racism against Muslims

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

DAVID CAMERON used his New Year's message to ramp up the racist assault on Muslims.

He warned that Muslims had to show "loyalty" in Britain's new imperialist war.

"If you walk our streets, learn in our schools, benefit from our society—you sign up to our values," he said.

This is just the latest attempt to brand Muslims as the "enemy within" as our rulers try to justify their new imperialist war.

One Muslim family from Waltham Forest in east London was stopped from boarding a flight to Disneyland in December.

The father Mohammed Mahmood Tariq spoke to Socialist Worker. He told of his "total surprise", as they had been "ten steps away from the plane".

The family is still waiting for an explanation. "It's simple to me," Mahmood said.

"It's because we are Muslim. If we were white British we would wouldn't still be waiting for an explanation.

"But we've got no freedom here—we're treated like second class citizens."

Offensive

The Tories are spearheading their Islamophobic offensive with the "Prevent" agenda, first introduced by Tony Blair's New Labour.

But the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 now legally forces public sector workers to look out for signs of "radicalisation".

David Cameron dismissed claims that it is targeting Muslim children as "paranoia in the extreme".

But Haras from Waltham Forest Prevent Watch said, "It's an Islamophobic policy—the raw data reflects that, with 67 percent of



MOHAMMED MAHMOOD TARIQ spoke to Socialist Worker

referrals being Muslim."

According to figures from Prevent Watch referrals increased by 500 percent in 2015.

Ifhat Smith, from Hackney in east London, told Socialist Worker, "My 14 year old son was in French class discussing the environment. He used the term 'ecoterrorism'."

A couple of days later he came home to tell Ifhat, "I was asked if I was affiliated to Isis."

Mainstream commentators have helped to whip up this racist witch-hunt. Now they are wringing their hands and complaining about such "excesses".

But this is the logical conclusion

of the Tories' state-sponsored Islamophobia.

Ifhat said, "I think something so draconian will always have excesses—the best thing is to scrap it."

The Tories thought that they could force Muslims into silence—but they're beginning to resist.

Tayyabah organised a 100-strong meeting in Waltham Forest last month.

She told Socialist Worker that Prevent was, "causing a lot of confusion".

"Many parents didn't understand the policy," she added.

Grassroots

"There have been meetings on Prevent. But we needed something more grassroots to raise awareness."

Stand Up to Racism in Newham, east London, released a broad-based statement last month signed by local Imams.

Now the Waltham Forest Council of Mosques has called for a boycott of Prevent.

Irfan Akhtar from the council said, "It's the first time a council of mosques has said it in that way, but we've been pretty much shunned since 2007."

"The government starts with saying, 'You guys have got the problem, not us.'"

"But we're not with the extremists—we're on the side of the majority that will be branded as extremist by this."

He added, "If we talk about imperialist wars or Israel they can't take it and say we're soft on terror."

"Anyone who can see the horror of this policy we should work with us against Prevent."



What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Stop 'all-out attack' on social housing

THE TORIES were set to try and rush their new Housing and Planning Bill through its last stages in the House of Commons this week. Campaigners warn it could mean "the end of social housing".

Around 200 housing protesters rallied outside parliament on Tuesday of this week. It was called by Architects for Social Housing (Ash) and the Kill the Housing Bill campaign, which includes the Defend Council Housing campaign. Genine, a tenant from Camberwell in south London told Socialist Worker, "I've lived in social housing all my life—I just find it so scary that this could happen."

One late addition to the bill is a measure to scrap secure lifetime

FIGURE IT OUT

98 %

Areas of Britain in which people earning the Living Wage will not be able to afford one of Housing Bill's flagship "starter homes"

£250,000

The expected cost of one of these homes outside London

£450,000

The expected cost of a starter home in London

tenancies for council tenants.

This would affect all new tenants, as well as existing tenants if their homes are redeveloped. It would also push councils to sell off "high value" homes, remove control over council rents and extend the right to buy to housing association homes.

It removes the obligation for developers to build a few homes at lower social rents in their developments. Instead they only have to build "starter homes" for sale at up to £450,000.

Simon Elmer from Ash explained, "This is a very sneaky bit of legislation—it's presented as a response to the housing crisis, but that conceals an all-out attack on social housing."

IN BRIEF

Sexual health services cut

GEORGE OSBORNE'S public health budget cuts mean councils will be forced to spend up to £40 million less on sexual health services, figures show.

Yet sexually transmitted infections are on the rise.

Diagnoses of gonorrhoea rose by 107 percent and syphilis by 63 percent in 2014.

Anti-choice group launched

ANTI-ABORTIONISTS in Scotland have set up a new organisation called Don't Stop a Beating Heart.

They are trying to take advantage of the coming devolution of abortion law.

Pro-choice Abortion Rights activists are getting organised to combat them.

Bankers let off the hook

A PUBLIC review into banking culture has been scrapped.

The review was set up by the Financial Conduct Authority last March after a number of banking scandals, then scrapped in December.

Rail fares rip off workers

RAIL OPERATORS have increased rail fares by 1.1 percent. The increase means a 25 percent rise over the last five years.

The Tories plan to cap annual fares increases. But that cap is to be funded by public cash—not the deep pockets of private operators.

IN THIS WEEK

2016

Fat cats make workers yearly pay

CHIEF EXECUTIVES of FTSE 100 companies had already earned more by Tuesday afternoon than the average worker will this year.

The High Pay Centre say that top bosses have pocketed the average annual salary of £27,645.





Tory spin on cuts doesn't wash with victims of flooding

by DAVE SEWELL

PEOPLE HIT by flooding are turning their anger on David Cameron after Tory cuts to flood defences, councils and rescue services left them unprotected.

Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank wreaked devastation in Cumbria, Lancashire, Yorkshire, north east Scotland and the Scottish borders over Christmas.

Cameron claimed the government was doing all it could to deal with “unprecedented” floods.

But Marilyn told Socialist Worker this was a “bloody joke”. Her council estate in Lower Broughton, Salford, was flooded on Boxing Day.

“Either he’s taking the mickey or he’s so out of touch,” she said. “He’s never known what it’s like to have no money.”

Maria Brabiner, also from Lower Broughton, said, “People are angry—many have lost everything. I was lucky, but some neighbours’ homes are just empty shells.

Sheltered

“It’s heartbreaking at the elderly people’s sheltered housing—they only have a ground floor and had nowhere to put their things.”

She added, “The government is letting people claim £500 for repairs, but that’s not enough.

“Everything’s been destroyed—freezers, ovens, furniture, flooring. And the water leaves behind this mud everywhere.

“Most people don’t have flood insurance, it’s very expensive.”

Maria said she was “gobsmacked that people weren’t given a warning.”

“In 1980 police knocked on everyone’s doors to give a flood warning, in 1983 they went in the streets with a megaphone,” she said.

In York—where four of the five MPs are Tories—

BACK STORY

Heavy flooding hit large parts of the north of England and Scotland during Christmas

●The Tories claim that they were caught unawares by the floods

●But ministers were presented with a report in November from flood organisations

●It warned they couldn’t cope with flooding because of the cuts

●But the Tories’ excuses aren’t washing with ordinary people, who are turning their anger against Cameron

people heckled Cameron over the cuts. Frank Ormston told Socialist Worker that many locals found his publicity stunts there “insulting”.

“He jumped out of his vehicle in his wellies and waded through water to speak to army commanders,” he said.

“But there was dry land only a few feet away. They didn’t need to be in water, but he wanted to be seen as a man of action.

“It was insulting. Plenty of people here are wading knee deep in water without a choice.”

Ministers claimed they were caught unawares, but they were shown a report from organisations that deal with floods in November.

It warned that cuts were leaving them less equipped to deal with floods, while extreme weather made them more likely.

Steve Johnston was in Leeds on Boxing Day. He reported, “You’re struck by the number of

Environment Agency and fire service workers, street cleaners and security guards.

“They all helped save people’s lives and belongings—and are all under threat from the Tory cuts.”

He added, “Homes, flats, offices and shops have been built on flood plains.”

More coverage on socialistworker.co.uk tinyurl.com/z2nuybw

MANY PEOPLE in York found David Cameron’s posturing ‘insulting’

Response from ordinary people shows up lack of official support

SOLIDARITY FROM ordinary people has shown up the lack of support from the authorities.

Gwen in York told Socialist Worker, “People have been doing everything they can to help those affected.

“Local churches and community centres have been used as collection points for food, clothes and electrical goods for those who have been flooded out.

“The GMB union has also put a call out for donations to be brought to its local office for distribution.”

Volunteer

Many have remarked on the solidarity from Muslim volunteer organisations.

In York the mosque was the first organisation to fill and distribute sandbags.

In Greater Manchester Syrian refugees helped with flood relief.

Refugee and coordinator Amaf told Socialist Worker, “This community welcomed us and protected us. And when I saw the

floods on TV I thought, that’s a way we can help them.

“Living through the crisis in Syria we know what it’s like to lose your home.

“We got a lot of greetings and a lot of welcoming thank yous all the time.”

Some right wing politicians and commentators called for

overseas aid to be cut to pay for flood relief.

Amaf said, “They have the right to think what they want.

“But by getting up and supporting each other we build our communities the way we want.

“We don’t have to wait for them.”

SYRIAN REFUGEES help distribute sandbags in Rochdale

Promise of new funding won’t undo cuts damage

NEW funding doesn’t come close to making up for a wide range of previous and continuing cuts.

The Environment Agency (EA) has reduced maintenance and even stopped operating some flood defences in Cumbria and Lancashire due to deep cuts.

Its chiefs say Treasury-imposed spending rules mean it isn’t allowed to spend anything on some schemes.

EA funding has dropped by 14 percent and the agency has suffered large-scale job cuts even after the major floods of 2014.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency also faces a 6 percent cut next year—the Scottish National Party announced this during the floods.

Questions are being asked in York about whether a similar lack of maintenance is behind the failure of

the River Foss Barrier. Its control room was flooded, threatening the electrics.

The whole public sector is tested when responding to floods—but across the board it has been weakened.

Local authority budgets have been cut more than 40 percent since 2010.

Many councils—including Labour-run

authorities—have cut schemes that manage water levels as a result.

In many areas the army has carried out most of the rescue operations, because large-scale cuts to fire brigades left them unable to cope.

Yet more fire stations in flood-hit areas are marked for closure.

Jump in flood plain housing

THE TORIES want to make it easier to build homes that would be at risk of flooding.

The Housing and Planning Bill, which MPs were set to debate this week, would grant “automatic permission in principle” for new homes on brownfield sites. Yet these are often areas most vulnerable to flooding.

Despite government attacks on “red tape” more, not less, planning is needed to prepare for floods.

The paving over of ground in urban areas means water can’t

be soaked up. And clearances of trees and vegetation on hills speeds up the flows to lower areas.

The town of Pickering in North Yorkshire avoided flooding with a series of “leaky dams”, new woodland, and other obstacles to slow water down.

But doing this on a larger scale would make the land less profitable—and clash with government and the European Union subsidies.

They say it’s about improving education and helping children from all backgrounds get a good start in life.

This is rubbish. The Tories are committed to transforming

Climate chaos brings floods

HEAVY RAIN is part of a worldwide pattern of extreme weather.

The past month has seen major flooding in South America, freak storms in North America and dangerously warm temperatures at the North Pole.

This is partly because 2015-16 is an El Nino year, when a long cycle of warm ocean

currents changes wind patterns. But many scientists are saying that this El Nino year could be one of the worst because it’s taking place in a hotter world.

A general increase in extreme rainfall has long been predicted as an effect of global warming.

Researchers at Oxford University and the Royal Netherlands

Meteorological Institute found that climate change had made Storm Desmond 40 percent more likely.

But the government continues to make climate change worse.

It has just announced new cuts to subsidies for solar power and new measures to allow fracking in national parks.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

CAPITALISM IS TEETERING ON THE EDGE OF CRISIS

THE NEW Year began with a new shock to global stock markets. For the first time ever, all of China’s main stock exchanges had to use emergency measures to halt trading after shares plummeted on Monday of this week.

Across the world markets sank. The knock-on effect was felt in Tokyo, Hong Kong, New York, Frankfurt, Paris and the City of London.

The trigger was China’s government releasing figures that showed up how weak its manufacturing growth was.

And it came alongside a diplomatic stand-off between two of the world’s biggest oil producers, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The Saudi price war against the US had already sent oil prices into freefall since 2014.

If Iran joins the race to the bottom they could get lower still.

Will this be a flash in the pan, or could it be the start of a new global crisis?

Kit Juckes, from the top French bank Societe Generale, summed up the best analysis among the ruling class: “I didn’t see that coming!” he said.

Almost a decade after the global financial crisis began, recovery remains sporadic and fragile.

Indebted “zombie firms” and weakened politicians lumber on, with no telling when they’ll next lurch into crisis.

Each time the economic crisis seems to be over it breaks out somewhere else.

It started with a “credit crunch” centred on the US.

Then it became a “sovereign debt crisis” threatening to tear apart the eurozone.

None of those places are out of the woods.

The US Federal Reserve central bank is only now trying to

“Almost a decade after the crisis began recovery remains sporadic and fragile

state-run schools into privately-run academies and free schools.

Yet just last week new figures were reported showing that some of the lowest-scoring primaries in Yorkshire were academies.

This follows a wider pattern. Ofsted’s figures show that a school is six times more likely to remain “inadequate” if it becomes an academy.

And the National Children’s Bureau has warned that academies are turning away children with special needs to try

and improve their “results”. The Tories’ real agenda is ideological. They have allowed schools to link teachers’ pay to their “performance”.

This opens up teachers and schools deemed to be failing to more attacks.

Their academy drive is about letting their fat cat mates get their hands on valuable public assets.

Claims that this will help the most disadvantaged children are the height of hypocrisy. Those children will suffer the most.

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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Divisions on Europe will dominate Tories

ONE THING'S certain about 2016. The struggle within the Labour Party will continue, but divisions among the Tories will become high profile.

The reason is simple. It became clear after the European Union (EU) summit held last December that David Cameron intends to press ahead with an in-out referendum—probably in June. Cameron committed himself to a referendum on EU membership because his party is deeply divided over the issue.

Actually, that's not exactly true. Strong Tory supporters of the European project are rare and usually quite old these days. Euroscepticism now dominates the party, driven by a combination of conviction and fear of Ukip's inroads into the Tory base.

The argument is really between moderate and extreme Eurosceptics. They disagree over whether British capitalism's interests are best served by leaving the EU or using the threat of "Brexit" to extract a better deal.

The pro-Brexit faction is powerful among Tory backbenchers and represented in the cabinet. Ministers who are dead certs to support Britain leaving include Iain Duncan Smith and Chris Grayling.

Boris Johnson and home secretary Theresa May, who both want to succeed Cameron, are sympathetic but manoeuvring to maximise their personal advantage.

Cameron promised to step down before the next election in 2020, so the struggle for the Tory leadership has begun.

Former Labour prime minister Harold Wilson faced similarly deep divisions in his party over Europe in the mid-1970s. Cameron has adopted his solution—to promise a referendum but to seek renegotiations that will allow him to campaign for Britain to stay in the EU.

These negotiations, which got serious at last month's Brussels summit, aren't entirely cosmetic. Two issues matter to the Tories. First, despite Britain staying out of the single currency, the City of London dominates euro trading.

From time to time, politicians and central bankers in France and Germany say they will put a stop to this.

Advantage

Cameron and his anointed successor George Osborne want to ensure that the City won't lose its advantage in currency trading if the eurozone becomes more integrated.

Secondly, there is the issue of immigration that Ukip has exploited so successfully. It's much harder for Cameron to deliver something meaningful on this. Germany and the eastern European states, which are otherwise quite eurosceptical, are strongly committed to free movement of labour within the EU.

German chancellor Angela Merkel and other European leaders are preoccupied with the refugee and eurozone crises. But precisely because the EU is so ramshackle these days, they can't afford Brexit.

Cameron claimed success after the December summit. European leaders gave him enough signals that they'd help construct a package that will allow him to campaign for Britain to stay in.

This has undoubtedly been Cameron and Osborne's aim from the start.

In what look like preparations for the referendum battle, former Tory leaders John Major and the traditionally eurosceptic William Hague have started making the pro-EU case.

They are undoubtedly expressing the position of the bulk of big business in Britain. Since the 1980s the British economy has been rebuilt as a platform for multinational corporations operating in the EU.

But in 1975 big business made sure that the Yes campaign had more than ten times the money of its rivals.

This time both firms and business organisations, such as the CBI, have been much more cautious about coming out in support of the "Remain" camp.

Maybe the plan is to come in late and strong—as in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum—and try to panic voters away from Brexit. But the polls on the EU are much closer than they were over Scottish independence until quite late in the day.

In any case, it's clear how the bulk of the ruling class is lining up. The left needs to decide quickly where it stands.

Labour right seeks to block a fight against cuts and war

Hypocrite MPs who accuse Corbyn of division are the real problem. Unity with them is a dead end, writes Nick Clark

LABOUR PARTY leader Jeremy Corbyn has come under sustained attack over the reshuffle of his shadow cabinet expected this week.

The move has been described as a "revenge reshuffle" after shadow cabinet members defied Corbyn over his opposition to bombing Syria last year.

Shadow foreign secretary Hilary Benn and shadow defence secretary Maria Eagle are expected to be moved or replaced. Both voted in favour of bombing.

Meanwhile Rochdale MP Simon Danczuk, who wrote in the Daily Mail newspaper attacking Corbyn, was suspended from Labour. He is under investigation for harassing a young woman who asked him about a job.

Harsh

But there has been no shortage of right wing, "moderate" and "soft left" Labour figures making harsh and sometimes bizarre criticisms.

Barrow and Furness MP John Woodcock said the reshuffle would make Corbyn's leadership an "authoritarian" and "brutal regime".

And former Labour cabinet minister Peter Mandelson accused Corbyn and the "hard left" in Labour of trying to divide the party.

The attacks are aimed at undermining Corbyn's



JEREMY CORBYN and Hilary Benn in happier times (above), even the Mail turns on its columnist MP (left)



leadership and blackmailing the Labour left.

The left wants Labour to oppose austerity and war. But it is held back by seeking unity with the right.

Shadow culture secretary Michael Dugher said Corbyn had to recognise that "Labour is a broad church, not a religious cult".

Meanwhile Ilford North

MP Wes Streeting said press briefings from Corbyn's office were "undermining the work of opposition".

He and others say that the division is stopping Labour from fighting the Tories—and they blame Corbyn.

But fighting the Tories would mean getting rid of warmongers like Hilary Benn who helped to pave the way for bombing in Syria.

Councils

And it would mean calling on Labour councils to refuse to pass on Tory cuts.

Corbyn and shadow chancellor John McDonnell wrote to Labour councillors last month calling on them not to set illegal anti-cuts budgets.

They argued that this

would mean even harsher austerity as the Tories would be able to take over and set the budget themselves.

They said councils should focus on building campaigns highlighting the impact of cuts.

But an anti-austerity budget would be a significant challenge to the Tories. It could be used to mobilise protests and strikes in its defence.

And it could help to build a much bigger movement that could strengthen Corbyn's leadership and the wider fight against the Tories.

On other pages

Cameron chum's racist response to riot >>Page 17

SNP weathers scandals and the Corbyn effect

DESPITE A spate of scandals since its general election landslide last year, the Scottish National Party (SNP) looks set for victory in May's Scottish parliament elections.

In a bid to win back disaffected Scottish trade unionists Jeremy Corbyn made the keynote speech at a huge STUC rally in Glasgow last month.

Offshore worker Stevie Boyle thinks Corbyn has "a hard job on his hands" facing down the "right wing MPs who don't reflect the rest of the party".

"A lot of us are fed up,"



Trust Nicola? SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon

he told Socialist Worker. "But it was really good to hear Jeremy Corbyn talking more on the things he was elected on," he added.

Stevie drew parallels between the mass support

Corbyn has won with the Yes movement for Scottish independence last year.

But Corbyn's leadership hasn't had the impact in Scotland it has elsewhere.

Former Labour member Anne Christie thinks the

SNP will hammer Labour again in May. She told Socialist Worker, "The Scottish elections will be bad news."

"The SNP have run a good game, blaming everything on Westminster. Labour have gone too far down at the moment and don't have enough time to get back up again."

Anne thinks Corbyn will help Labour revive in Scotland but she's not yet ready to rejoin. How effectively Labour can fight to regain lost ground remains to be seen.

Raymie Kiernan

Politicians plot a fresh clampdown on refugees

An historic migration of refugees has provoked repression—and resistance, reports **Dave Sewell**

A TWO year old boy became the first refugee death of 2016 last Saturday, when his dinghy crashed off a Greek island. At least 19 people were killed on Christmas Eve when their boat sank off Turkey.

Some 26 refugees are now known to have died outside Britain's border in northern France last year.

More than one million refugees entered Europe by sea last year, according to new figures from the International Organisation for Migration. Some 3,770 of them died.

In Germany alone, government figures show that almost 1.1 million people applied for asylum last year. This is one of the biggest migrations of human history, and it shows no sign of slowing down.

Refugees face European Union (EU) border controls that its member states have built to keep them out.

Even if they get to Europe, their ordeal is far from over.

Under pressure from Britain's Tories, the French government is building its own facilities in Calais.

Presented as a humanitarian measure, they are designed to make it easier to detain or deport people from the notorious "jungle" shantytown.

Imposed

Sweden imposed controls on its border with Denmark for the first time since the 1950s on Monday of this week.

Greece has begun to reopen detention centres whose abolition was one of the proudest achievements of the left government elected last January.

But resistance from refugees has inspired widespread solidarity.

There was outrage before Christmas when Denmark's government announced plans to confiscate jewellery from refugees. The police federation had to say cops couldn't implement the plan.

In Britain Sudanese migrant Abdul Rahman Haroun had been set

BACK STORY

Last year saw one of the biggest migrations of human history

● More than one million refugees entered Europe by sea last year

● The number of arrivals by sea was four times higher than the figure the previous year

● Almost half came from Syria and over a fifth from Afghanistan

● Politicians across Europe have clamped down on refugees

● But refugees' resistance has won support—and generated wider solidarity

to begin trial this week after walking through the Channel Tunnel last August. But prosecutors are now reconsidering after the Home Office granted him refugee status on Christmas Eve.

This followed a letter-writing campaign by South London Stand up to Racism and motions of support from rail workers' union branches.

Anti-racists from across Greece are set to march on the EU's border wall later this month, demanding it is lifted to prevent further deaths at sea.

A wave of solidarity with refugees saw collections and delegations to Calais.

In Britain the Stand up to Racism national demonstrations on Saturday 19 March is a crucial opportunity to turn this solidarity into political protest.

Activists will demand the Tories open the door to refugees fleeing war and poverty.

Every activist can call on their union, trades council or local campaign to sponsor coaches and other transport to show solidarity with refugees against repression and racism.



On other pages...

Britain's Syria intervention is exposed as a farce >>Page 8



A VOLUNTEER comforts a Syrian woman on the Greek island of Lesbos last November

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

ROTHERHAM TRIAL

'I told that officer, nothing happened,' alleged child abuse victim tells court

by **SADIE ROBINSON**

A CORRUPT police officer had sex with young girls and gave drugs to a man accused of abusing children, a court heard last month.

Arshid Hussain, Basharat Hussain, Qurban Ali, Majid Bostan, Sajid Bostan, Karen MacGregor and Shelley Davies are on trial at Sheffield Crown Court. They deny over 60 charges relating to alleged child sexual abuse between the late 1980s and 2003.

One complainant, Girl B, said she told detective constable Kenneth Dawes she was being abused in Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

She said Dawes "used to come to houses where we were". "He used to have sex with girls," she said. "He used to take drugs from people and pass them on to Ash."

The jury heard that Arshid Hussain and Qurban Ali were known as Mad Ash and Blind Ash respectively.

The court heard that Girl B was abused from the age of 11 and that Arshid Hussain made her have sex with men he owed money to.

Tahir Khan QC asked whether



Rotherham in South Yorkshire

she told anyone. She replied, "I told that officer, nothing happened. I told my mum, nothing happened. I told the care home, nothing happened."

Defence lawyers questioned her about inconsistencies in police interviews. She told the court, "I am standing by what I said."

Girl B said she had a baby in March 2000 after being raped by Arshid Hussain and Sajid Bostan.

She said she "wasn't in a good way" when she began a consenting sexual relationship with Bostan in 1999.

The court heard how another

complainant tried to report her abuse to a police officer when she was 12. In a police interview she said the officer "ripped up loads of paperwork and said I was lying".

The court heard that Basharat Hussain forced another alleged victim, Girl E, to store guns and drugs in her bedroom.

In video evidence Girl E described assaults at the hands of Basharat and Arshid Hussain. She said Basharat threatened to kill her and her family.

"I knew what they were capable of," she said. "People bowed down to them."

In a statement Girl E made after Basharat Hussain was arrested for drug offences in 2003, she said her relationship with him had been "mainly fine".

Gillian Batts, representing Hussain, said she could have reported the abuse. Girl E said, "For who to believe me? It was a relief they had got him and he had gone, that was my way out."

Batts said Girl E's claims were inspired by the 2014 Jay report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. Girl E said, "They are not inspirations, it was my life."

The trial continues.

SPANISH STATE

Catalonia set for new elections

CATALONIA'S parliament looked set to call new elections after failing to form a government last Sunday.

This deepens the political paralysis across the Spanish state, where there is no sign of a new government almost three weeks after a general election.

The Catalan election last September saw parties calling for independence from Spain win an overall majority in parliament for the first time.

But the alliance led by centre-right outgoing president Artur Mas only won 62 seats—not enough to form a government.

This gave the other pro-independence group, anti-capitalist left party CUP which won an unprecedented ten MPs, a deciding role.

CUP came under immense pressure to endorse a Mas government or be seen as wrecking Catalonia's chance for independence.

It held an emergency national meeting to vote on its position on Sunday 27 December.

The result was a dead heat with 1,515 voting for backing Mas and 1,515 voting against.

But CUP's leading committee came out against backing Mas last Saturday.

If MPs do not agree on a new president by Saturday there will be new elections. This makes a new general election across the Spanish state more likely.

For more on the Spanish general election go to bit.ly/1Plwf1H

PALESTINIANS

Israel starts clampdown

ISRAELI PRIME minister Binyamin Netanyahu has announced a wave of repression against Palestinians in Israel.

It followed a shooting attack in capital city Tel Aviv on Friday of last week.

Two Israelis were killed and seven injured after Palestinian Nashat Milhem opened fire with a submachine gun in a Tel Aviv bar.

Nashat is also said to have shot taxi driver Amin Shaaban later that day.

The attack came amid a new upsurge in Palestinian resistance to Israel that began last October.

The Israeli state has killed more than 120 Palestinians and injured some 11,000 since October.

For a longer version of this article go to socialistworker.co.uk

The British farce in Syria reflects a deeper crisis

by JUDITH ORR

BRITAIN'S MILITARY intervention in Syria has been exposed as a farce. Westminster's warmongers argued that it was essential.

Yet there have been no manned airstrikes since three that took place in the five days following the parliamentary vote.

All these fell on Omar oilfield, a target the US said it had destroyed six weeks earlier.

One British drone dropped one missile on an Isis checkpoint on Christmas Day.

Part of the warmongers' case for bombing Syria was that Britain was the only Western power to have vital "precision" Brimstone missiles. They have not been used.

David Cameron claimed Britain had to join airstrikes to bring peace to Syria and to make Britain safe from Isis. His supporters on the Tory and Labour benches said the same.

But now Isis is directly threatening Britain because it has joined the war. A masked man in a new Isis propaganda video specifically makes threats against Britain.

The video appears to show the execution of five men accused of being spies for Britain.

Dictator

Ordinary Syrians are no safer. They face attacks from Isis, bombing from the forces of dictator Bashar al-Assad, his ally Russia and the US.

The US is carrying out 90 percent of Western airstrikes.

The real reason Britain joined the bombing of Syria was to gain access to any future Western carve up of the region.

Like the most recent imperialist ventures in the Middle East it will



BRITAIN'S DECISION to bomb Syria provoked protests across the country

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

only bring greater conflict and violence in its wake.

The return of British troops to Sangin in Helmand province in Afghanistan last December showed this starkly.

The troops are part of a Nato contingent sent in to tackle Taliban supporters laying siege to the town.

British Special Forces were described as being there solely in an "advisory" role.

Yet evidence has emerged that they actively joined a battle that

saw 20 Taliban supporters killed.

Sangin was the centre of the Nato occupation of Afghanistan.

Nearly a quarter of all the British soldiers killed in the war on Afghanistan from 2001 died in the battle to hold the town.

Its fall to the Taliban is symbolic of the West's defeat in the country.

British troops have also returned to Libya although Cameron lauded military intervention there in 2011 as a great success.

And in Iraq British airstrikes

over Christmas have so far failed to enable the Iraqi army to even fully retake Ramadi from Isis forces. Isis has held it since May last year.

The US and its imperialist allies are struggling to keep control of a region they see as strategically important.

But weakened imperialist powers are still dangerous.

Anti-war activists must keep up the pressure for Britain to pull out of all the imperialist intervention in the region.

SAUDI ARABIA

Regime's executions spark protests across region

PROTESTS ERUPTED in Saudi Arabia and across the region after the Saudi regime executed Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr last Saturday.

The prominent opposition leader and Shia cleric was one of 47 people executed who were accused of "terrorism".

Al-Nimr was an outspoken supporter of protests in 2011 against the regime in the majority Sunni country.

Protests broke out when he was arrested in 2012.

After his death al-Nimr's family issued a statement. "He demanded legitimate rights bravely," it said. "He rejected



A protester holds up an image of Nimr al-Nimr, who was executed last week

sectarianism for more than four decades."

Protests against the executions took place in the mainly Shia Eastern Province.

As Socialist Worker went to press one person had been killed and a child shot and injured.

Protesters defied a ban on public demonstrations.

They chanted the slogans of 2011, "The people want the fall of the regime", and "Down with the al Saud family".

Outrage among protesters grew when the regime announced it had buried those executed in an unknown burial ground. It refused requests from

the families for the bodies to be returned for family burials.

The executions sparked demonstrations across the region.

Protesters attacked the Saudi embassy in Tehran, the capital of Iran, a mainly Shia country.

The Saudi regime is a close ally of Britain. It wants to portray the protests as an extension of an ongoing conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and Shia and Sunni Muslims.

It hopes to disguise the fact that the courageous demonstrations could develop into a wider revolt against the tyranny of the Saudi monarchy.

Climate jobs now

THERE IS no contradiction between stopping climate change and full employment.

Production can be turned to produce the things we so badly need to stop catastrophic climate change.

I think many in the environmental movement have seen the workers in the polluting industries as part of the problem.

But they can be the most powerful force in the fight for a better world.

Julia Robertson
Swansea

The debate in Labour

LAST MONTH I attended an impressive 80-strong Momentum meeting.

An argument developed between some newer members who wanted to start actively campaigning and more established Labour leftwingers.

They argued that Momentum locally could not make decisions until the "directors" nationally decided on the next moves.

Others wanted to discuss deselecting MPs and opposing expulsions of socialists.

This is a genuine problem for Momentum. Is it an internal Labour Party organisation? Or should it build on its success by mobilising for the anti-austerity, anti-racist and anti-war movements?

Socialists outside Labour should fight for broadening and strengthening those movements while working with comrades in Labour.

Simon Hester
North London

Refugees from Syrian city say no to bombing

I ALSO met some Syrian refugees while out campaigning with Socialist Worker (Letters, 19 December).

Three women from the Syrian city of Homs described the utter devastation of that city.

For them there is no distinction between good and bad bombs.

They know that Isis, Assad, and the imperialist powers—Russia and the West—care nothing for

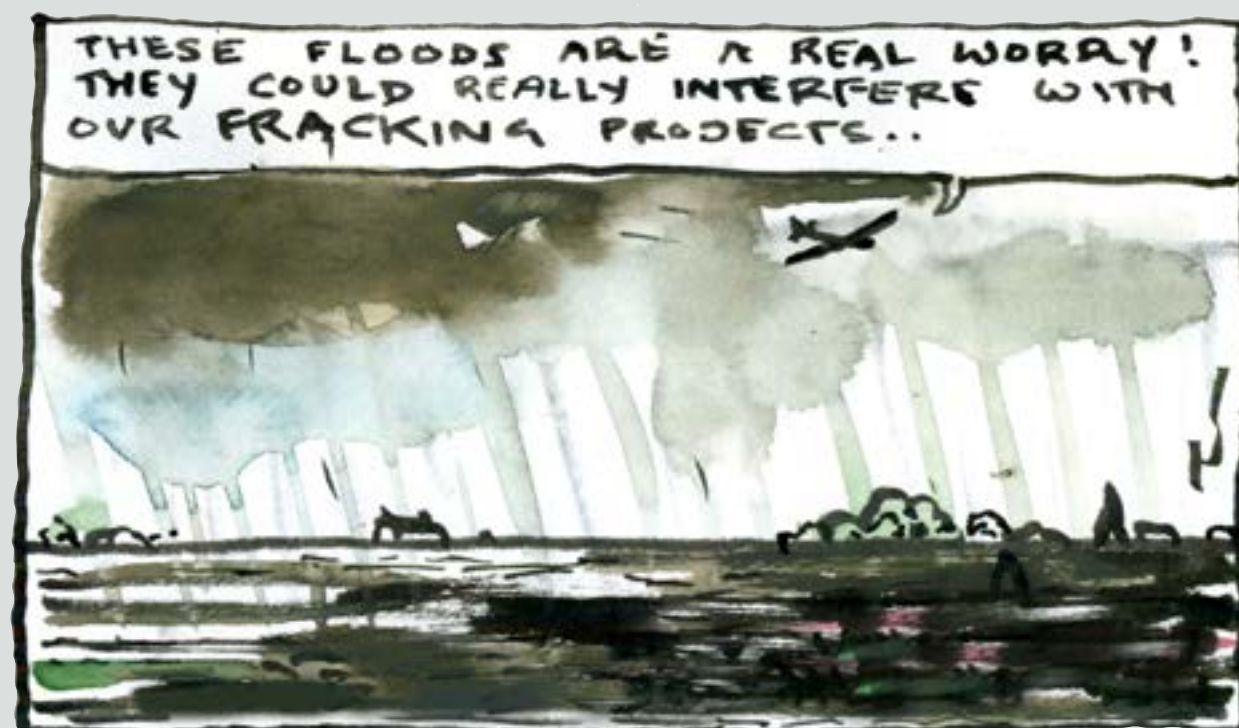


ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Israeli 'Hate Wedding' is a product of its racist society

THE RACISM at the heart of Israeli society was exposed last month when a video from a wedding of two settlers was released.

Settlers were shown celebrating the death of 18 month old Ali Dawabshe and his parents.

The Palestinian family were killed in an arson attack on their home last summer.

Israeli settlers had entered their village in the middle of the night and attacked their home with a Molotov cocktail.

Most people would be outraged at the brutal murders. But those at the wedding danced with rifles and Molotov cocktails while singing about killing Palestinians.

One of them can be seen holding a picture of the Dawabshe

family in the air, stabbing it repeatedly with a knife.

The couple who were getting married are said to have been friends of settlers who had been arrested over the murder.

Last week one of them, Amiram Ben-Uliel, was charged with murder over the attacks. Another unnamed suspect has been charged as his accomplice.

Both the suspected attackers and the wedding-goers are members of the "Hilltop Youth" settler movement.

It aims to steal Palestinian land by establishing settlement outposts in the occupied West Bank and then attacking the Palestinians who live there.

Israeli politicians rushed to

condemn the revellers. They say the Hilltop Youth are extremists who don't represent Israel. In fact they are the product of a deeply racist society.

Israel was founded on the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. This continues today.

The Israeli housing ministry is currently working on plans to build more than 50,000 settlement homes in the West Bank.

And Palestinians in Israel face systematic oppression and abuse.

Vile murders like the killing of the Dawabshe family are part and parcel of a society that is racist to its core.

Simon Hall
North Tyneside

Dredging up past mistakes

their suffering.

They were encouraged to know that people in the West are actively supporting the Syrian population.

They left us with one very chilling comment that should fortify us in our campaigning.

When they call home the first question they ask their families is, "Are you still alive?"

Graham Richards
Manchester

BEFORE WATER was privatised, water boards were composed of elected local councillors and MPs who were responsible for seeing that rivers were dredged.

But when water was privatised, these elected officials were replaced with a lot of venture capitalists. They found that you can't actually run a public utility



Dredging: not profitable

at a profit unless you dump some vital, but expensive, functions. Like regularly dredging rivers.

And now we see the inevitable result. The rivers are full of mud, silt and

assorted rubbish, and they overflow.

The solution is staring us in the face. Water must be renationalised immediately

Keith Ackerman
Essex

Just a thought...

Letter from a Red Reverend

I TOO am both a Christian and a socialist (Letters, 19 December). Indeed, I am an Anglican vicar.

I was also recently expelled from the Labour Party. But Jeremy Corbyn gives hope that Labour may once again be socialist.

Meanwhile reading Socialist Worker keeps me very well informed.

Reverend Graham Sawyer
Burnley

Tories didn't cause war

WHY DOES Socialist Worker call bombing Syria a "Tory war" (Socialist Worker online, 12 December)?

It's not a problem of parties, but parliament and much more.

Connor Upcott
on Twitter

Use recycled paper, please

A SHAME to see Socialist Worker doesn't print on recycled paper.

Harming indigenous forest people to print. Boo!

Simon Nash
on Twitter

No excuse for Calais shame

THE TORIES should be ashamed about the migrant deaths in Calais last year (Socialist Worker, 19 December).

Just three ferries would transport them all to safety.

Sarah Wilkinson
Shropshire

The legacy of imperialism

MEDIA commentators see advantage for Isis ignoring national borders whereas Western military cannot.

Yet the West created many of the borders arbitrarily. It's imperialist hypocrisy that knows no borders.

Dermot Smyth
Chesterfield

Thanks for coverage, SW

THANKS FOR the great coverage of the struggle in 2015.

Looking forward to the class struggle in 2016.

Sasha Simic
East London

BILLIONS MADE FROM CARE HOME CRISIS

Care homes are charging residents and local authorities tens of thousands every year while many care workers are paid less than the minimum wage. But nursing home bosses predict that scores will close because they are not making enough money. **Raymie Kiernan** says the big firms that stand behind social care are still raking it in

SOCIAL CARE is in crisis. The Tories have made savage cuts as part of their drive to dismantle the welfare state—and handed life and death decisions to profiteering corporations.

They have ignored repeated warnings from care organisations, directors of adult social services and public and private health care bosses of an impending collapse in services.

Instead they slashed real terms spending on social care by £4.6 billion over the last parliament. Older people are particularly at risk.

The number of over 65s receiving publicly funded care dropped by 27 percent.

In nine out of ten local authorities only those with “substantial” or “critical” care needs are deemed to be worthy of publicly funded services.

Denying hundreds of thousands of people access to care fuels pressure on the NHS as people turn to it when they reach crisis point. But the NHS is also suffering unprecedented cuts. And once treated, patients can be stuck in hospital if the social care services they need once they are out aren’t in place.

The problem, called delayed transfers of care (DToC), is getting worse. In the year from June 2014 to June



More funding for social care would let people live much fuller lives

2015 DToCs were 17 percent higher than the previous year.

Between June 2010 and June 2014 the estimated cost to the NHS of patients waiting for social care related support rose to £526 million.

Some of those on the right say that the problem is that people are living longer. The number of people over 65 in Britain has nearly doubled since the mid 1970s. This group made up almost a fifth of the population last year.

And the trend is set to continue. By 2035 the number of over 85s is expected to be more than double the 2010 figure. A third of babies born in 2013 are expected to live until they are 100 years old.

But the fact that people are living longer should be something to celebrate. That it isn’t says a lot about the kind of society we live in and its priorities. For the Tories and their rich mates, people become a burden when they retire.

They are no longer working and producing the surplus value that the bosses can make their profits from. For the capitalists, that makes older people worthless.

The Tories bemoan the “pensions bill” as they call it—without admitting that government income is made up of taxes that workers pay.

Britain is a rich society in a rich

world. There are easily enough resources to make sure that every older person has a decent standard of life.

Getting older could be a source of joy and happiness as people are relieved from the burden of work and have the time to do more fulfilling things.

Too many older people are left with very little in their lives but a constant stress of how to make ends meet.

Privatisation

More funding for social care could let people manage their health problems much better—and live much fuller lives.

Yet governments refuse to put the resources in to make this happen. They won’t even meet people’s basic needs.

The rising number of older people means more demand for long term and chronic condition care.

But the Tories continue to slash local authority funding, which is driving more and more privatisation of services (see right).

One recent report estimated that by 2020-21 the funding gap in residential care for older people alone would be £1.1 billion.

It said that if the residential care sector only provided the amount of



(above) GLASGOW residential care workers on strike in 2014. Fights for workers’ rights are in both the public and private sector

PICTURE: GEORGE CONNELLY

(left) Care home providers are determined to present a glossy image to potential customers



could easily be the next Southern Cross. Terra Firma owner, Guy Hands, pointed to Four Seasons’ ownership of 60 percent of its care homes as a counter argument. But with debts of half a billion pounds many are unconvinced.

The Financial Times newspaper last November reported “industry sources” saying, “Four Seasons is fine until Christmas.

“But after that all bets are off. They will run out of money and Hands won’t want to bail them out. I can’t see it being around in its current form in a year’s time.”

Four Seasons was already selling 53 care homes. Bupa, the second largest operator, was putting 200 up for auction.

Terra Firma won’t be using any of the more than £700 million of its own capital it announced was available for deals last year to protect the care of older people in residential homes. Neither will Guy Hands stump up any of his estimated personal fortune of £250 million.

If the NHS were to take over responsibility for the care of those lost care home beds it would cost £3 billion a year.

The crisis in social care threatens to spiral into a much bigger disaster—and the most vulnerable will be expected to pay the price.

A lucrative industry for private equity

THE CURRENT crisis is a warning against a future of privatised care.

Care is big business. Some 90 percent of Britain’s care homes are privately owned

But nearly 60 percent of residents rely in part or wholly on state funding.

Between 2005-06 and 2012-13 the number of people using local authority-supported residential care homes rose by more than a fifth—to 164,000.

One projection forecast a further 15 percent rise in demand by the end of this Tory government.

Profit margins are high. The industry is dominated by low pay and labour is estimated to be 60-80 percent of all costs.

For some years firms have milked the public purse while squeezing staff.

Figures last year showed that more than half the care companies investigated by customs officials were paying their workers less than the minimum wage.

Of the 224 care companies HMRC investigated 115 failed to pay nearly 7,000 workers the minimum wage.

Scam that hides profits

FOUR SEASONS is the largest operator in Britain’s £24 billion care home industry. It announced last November that it was closing seven care homes in Northern Ireland, giving just 12 weeks’ notice.

The homes were “operating at a loss and no longer viable” it said.

Four Seasons reported pre-tax losses of over £24 million last year. Yet private equity owners Terra Firma have Four Seasons paying £50 million a year in interest to service debts.

This masks the fact that money is being made—and is a common practice.

Private equity firm Bridgepoint Capital plays the same game with Care UK, which also has a significant stake in Britain’s care homes.

Bridgepoint received £90 million in interest payments from Care UK in 2013. Meanwhile Care UK posted operating losses of £9 million and slashed workers’ pay in Doncaster by up to £7,000 a year.

For private equity firms, care

providers are cash cows. They set up complex financial models involving inter-company loans.

Four Seasons, Bupa UK, HC-One, Care UK and Barchester warned last year that extra costs would mean “thousands of older people could be left without a home”.

They bemoaned stagnating fees and the “National Living Wage” of £7.20 an hour, which comes into force in April. They predicted these things could spark the “catastrophic collapse” of the care sector.

The firms were fishing for a bailout from Tory chancellor George Osborne in the run-up to his Autumn Statement. He responded by giving local authorities in England the power to raise council tax by 2 percent—selling it as a boost for social care.

But there is no guarantee this would raise the extra £2 billion Osborne claimed, or that councils would spend it on social care. And it wouldn’t be enough to treat the damage already caused by his cuts.



Bridgepoint Capital portrays itself as a caring investor in care homes

They owed workers an average of £200 each, or £1.3 million in total.

But the industry is getting increasingly shrill.

Fees from publicly funded residents are stagnating while private firms’ employment practices are increasingly in the spotlight.

They believe they should be free to extract public subsidies, pay illegal wages and as little tax as they can get away with.

Their investments have nothing to do with providing care for the most vulnerable in our society.

One market analyst moaned



Of 224 care firms investigated, 115 failed to pay the minimum wage

that, “Homes catering mainly for publicly paid residents in non-affluent areas have sunk to worryingly low profit levels”—hovering around 15 percent of revenues.

Yet “operators focusing on self-pay residents in affluent areas of the country” can enjoy “healthy profits” of 25-30 percent of revenues.

The analyst noted, “New investment for private payers remains strong.

“Investment in new capacity has largely dried up in areas dominated by public pay.”

The latest half yearly figures to March 2015 show that for the first time overall care home capacity—the difference between closures and new openings—show a net loss of 3,000 beds.

As councils slash funding, debt-laden private equity-owned firms that have modelled their business on profiting from publicly funded residents are starting to squeal.

They threaten care home closures because cuts threaten their bottom line.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown.

Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } DISTRICT MEETINGS

BIRMINGHAM

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BRISTOL

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,
5th Floor, The Canteen,
Hamilton House,
80 Stokes Croft,
BS1 3QY

HOME COUNTIES

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 8pm,
Stockwood Hotel,
41-43 Stockwood Crescent
(enter via London Rd car park),
Luton, LU1 3SS

LEEDS

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

MANCHESTER

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7pm,
The Mechanics Institute,
103 Princess St,
M1 6DD

NORWICH

Marxism and women's liberation

Speaker, author Judith Orr
Thu 21 Jan, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 6pm,
Belmont Filmhouse,
49 Belmont St,
AB10 1JS

BARNLEY

Is the Labour Party about to split?

Thu 7 Jan, 6.30pm,
YMCA, Blucher St,
S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

The Communist Manifesto and our fight for a better world

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BRADFORD

After Cop21 — why capitalism can't save the planet

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,
Equity Centre, Perkin House,
82 Grattan Rd,
BD12 1LU

BRIGHTON

Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism

Wed 6 Jan, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St,
BN1 1AF

BRISTOL: NORTH

How we beat anti-union laws in the past and how we can do it today

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,
5th Floor, The Canteen,
Hamilton House,
80 Stokes Croft,
BS1 3QY

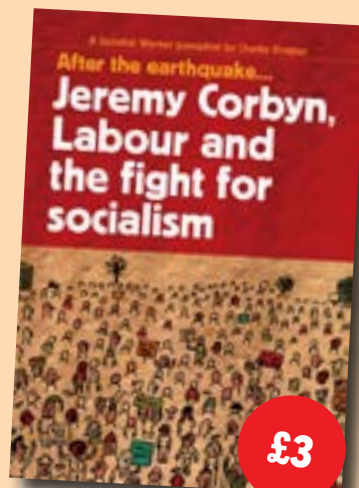
BRISTOL: SOUTH

The mass strike — how workers can fight back

Wed 20 Jan, 7.30pm,
YHA,
14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop

1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE • 020 7637 1848 • bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



In this pamphlet Charlie Kimber looks at the roots of Corbyn's triumph, puts it in the context of Labour's history over the last hundred years and examines the potential for further successes—and the obstacles in Corbyn's path



In a wide-ranging critique, Roddy Slorach describes how capitalist society segregates and marginalises disabled people, turning our minds and bodies into commodities and generating new impairment and disability as it does so



As austerity bites and new debates about oppression rage, Judith Orr steers a path through the history and future of the fight for women's liberation. It's a powerful and urgent call to action to a key political question of our time

CARDIFF

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX

CHELMSFORD

Human nature — are we too selfish for socialism?

Thu 21 Jan, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd, CM1 2QL

CHESTERFIELD

Fast food workers in the US — organising the unorganised

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

DERBY

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next to Britannia Mill),
DE22 3BL

DONCASTER

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
Women's Centre,
21 Cleveland St, DN1 3EH

DUDLEY

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St,
DY8 1EP

DUNDEE

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

ESSEX

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainsford Rd,
CM1 2QL

EXETER

Stop bombing Syria — no to war and imperialism

Thu 7 Jan, 7pm,
New Horizon Cafe,
47 Longbrook St,
EX4 6AW

GLASGOW: NORTH

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
Posh Nosh Cafe,
86 Maryhill Rd, G20 7QB

HUDDERSFIELD

Is the media all powerful?

Wed 6 Jan, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

LANCASTER

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7.15pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane,
LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

After Cop21 — why capitalism can't save the planet

Thu 7 Jan, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,
The Pepperpot Centre,
1a Thorpe Close,
Ladbroke Grove (very close to the station),
W10 5XL

LONDON: Brixton

A socialist history of the Labour Party

Wed 6 Jan, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,
facing Windrush Square,
SW2 1EP

LONDON: CAMDEN

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,
Theatro Technis,
26 Crowndale Rd,
NW1 1TT

LONDON: EALING

Capitalism vs the climate — how do we stop environmental disaster?

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,
West London Trade Union Club,
33-35 Acton High St, W3 6ND

LONDON: HACKNEY

The rise of the Nazi Front National in France — how can it be stopped?

Thu 7 Jan, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

LONDON: KINGSTON

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7pm,
Kingston Quaker Centre,
Fairfield East, KT1 2PT

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd (near Greenwich main line and DLR Station),
SE10 8JA

LONDON: NEWHAM

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: SOUTHWARK

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,
Camberwell Leisure Centre (Room 2),
Artichoke Place (off Camberwell Church St,
SE5 8TS

LONDON: TOTTENHAM

Capitalism and war

Wed 6 Jan, 7.30pm,
Kitabevi Cafe,
410 Tottenham High Rd,
N17 9JB

PORTSMOUTH

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
Somerstown Central,
Rivers St,
PO5 4EY

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SWANSEA

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 14 Jan, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

TELFORD

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Thu 21 Jan, 7.30pm,
Carriages,
The Parade, Wellington,
TF1 1PY

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Prospects for socialists in 2016

Wed 13 Jan, 7.30pm,
Grain Store,
King St,
WV1 1ST

YORK

Why we get the New Year Blues — Marxism and alienation

Wed 6 Jan, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

BIRMINGHAM

Stand Up to the Tories — Stand Up for Democracy in Unison

Sat 16 Jan, 1.30-5pm,
Carrs Lane Conference Centre, Carrs Lane,
B4 7SX.

Open to all Unison members

DORCHESTER

Can Corbynomics work?

Sat 16 Jan, 1.30pm,
Colliton Club,
Colliton Park,
DT1 1XJ.

Organised by Dorset Socialists

NATIONAL

Unite Against Fascism national conference

Sat 6 Feb, 9.30am,
NUT HQ, Hamilton House,
Mableton Place,
central London,
WC1H 9BD.

The conference will discuss tackling Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and building solidarity with refugees, among other things.

Supported by the NUT and CWU unions and Stand Up To Racism

Stop Trident — march and rally

Sat 27 Feb, 12 noon,
Trafalgar Square.
Called by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.
cnduk.org

Marxism festival 2016

Thu 30 June — Mon 4 July,
central London
marxismfestival.org.uk

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enquires@swp.org.uk
Post PO Box 42184,
London SE11 9BW

'An opportunity to assist the struggle against apartheid'

Forthcoming film *London Recruits* tells the story of young activists who fought apartheid. **Sabby Sagall** spoke to some of them about that struggle

LONDON RECRUITS tells an inspiring story from the struggle against South African apartheid.

It's the story of 60 London-based activists. They were students and young workers in the International Socialists (IS)—the Socialist Workers' Party's forerunner—and Young Communist League (YCL).

These young women and men entered South Africa in November 1969.

They were carrying suitcases with false bottoms, full of leaflets urging resistance to the racist regime.

Once detonated, their bucket-type leaflet bombs would release thousands of leaflets into the air.

The "bombs" were set off in urban black areas, near black workplaces or at railway stations during rush hour.

For YCL member Sean Hosey it was a "unique and brief opportunity to assist the struggle when it was needed".

The world was catching fire in the late 1960s. The Civil Rights and anti-war movements were on the march in the US. In May 1968, French students fought riot police and workers staged the biggest general strike in human history.

"As young people of a socialist persuasion at the time, we had great expectations in changing the world," Sean told *Socialist Worker*. "South Africa was a key issue."

High

But the situation inside South Africa was very different. Sean explained, "Our contribution was at a time when South Africa's security apparatus was at a high point and resistance at a low point."

This repression climaxed with the Rivonia trial of 1963-64 that imprisoned ten African National Congress (ANC) leaders, including Nelson Mandela. But a few escaped to London and began reviving underground resistance.

Ronnie Kasrils, a leading ANC and Communist Party member, was a key figure among London exiles.

In the 2012 book *London Recruits* Ronnie describes how the leaflet bombs were activated in November 1969, August 1970 and August 1971 in South Africa's biggest cities.

George Paizis was a student activist at the London School of Economics (LSE). "In 1969 I arrived in Johannesburg with my double bottom suitcase," he told *Socialist Worker*. "It was packed with letters for ANC contacts."

George explained how he carried out his mission. "I was staying with my uncle, a former Communist guerrilla, who'd had fled to South Africa



LONDON RECRUITS John Rose and Mike Milotte (top) and Norman Lucas (bottom)

to avoid capture," he said.

"He had discovered my ripped up suitcase, questioned me and quietly offered to take the case for disposal somewhere safe.

"I soon posted them and returned home."

In 1970 Mike Milotte and John Rose, IS activists at the LSE, travelled to South Africa posing as wealthy tourists.

They hired a car and drove to a Durban marketplace, with buckets ticking loudly on the back seat. A group of armed plain-clothed cops stopped them.

When one pointed to the brown paper bags containing the buckets, Mike thought the game was up.

But John brought his elbow down on to the policeman's forearm. In an imperious voice he said, "We're British tourists."

Being white tourists was enough to elicit a humble apology from the policeman. They primed the "bombs" and drove off.

On returning to London, they

learned from Ronnie that their mission had been a complete success.

John participated in a second mission—another success.

In 1971 London recruit Mary Chamberlain's then boyfriend, Carey Harrison, was approached by an old Cambridge friend, Katherine Levine.

The plan was for them to "immigrate" with their "household effects" packed in old tea chests with false bottoms containing ANC and Communist literature.

Sailed

They married and sailed for South Africa in 1972 and rented a flat in Cape Town.

In the following days, they packed over 5,000 packages of literature and stamped and posted them from every post box in Cape Town. They left immediately afterwards.

That mission remains Mary's proudest achievement.

Sean was not so lucky. On his second mission to South Africa, he was tasked with delivering documents

to ANC comrades in Durban.

But a trap had been laid. He was caught, tortured, tried and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

By the mid 1970s the liberation movement had recovered. And the following decade an international boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign raised solidarity to a new level.

But it was arguably built on the foundations the London recruits had established.

The days of the apartheid regime were numbered.

Ken Keable, a YCL London recruit and editor of *London Recruits*, told *Socialist Worker*, "I'm very glad the film is being made—it's an inspirational story.

"But nor was it just a moral cause. Britain had a financial stake in supporting the racist regime.

"Anti-racism and international solidarity against capitalism are both highly relevant in today's world."

London Recruits will be released later this year

FILM

Socialist Worker's guide to a few films coming out in 2016. Look out for reviews in our coming issues

SNOWDEN

Open Road Films
May 2016

JOSEPH Gordon-Levitt stars as whistleblower Edward Snowden in this upcoming film based on Luke Harding's book *The Snowden Files*.

Snowden worked for the US National Security Agency (NSA).

But in 2013 he exposed

Gordon-Levitt stars as Snowden

the secret surveillance of phone and internet communications by the US and British governments.

JANIS: LITTLE GIRL BLUE

Dogwoof
February 2016

JANIS JOPLIN'S music captured the mood of hope and despair of the 1960s

Janis Joplin

before she died aged 27 in 1971.

This movie takes an in-depth look at Joplin's life, on and off stage.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES

Lionsgate
February 2016

IN JANE Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, lovers' tangled relationships are already up against the English class system.

Now they've got a new challenge—an army of undead zombies. Based on the 2009 book, this is an interesting mash-up of 19th century drama and modern zombie fiction.

Street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to himself in Tunisia in January 2011 after police harassed him over his street stall. How did this kickstart the revolutionary process in Egypt?

The Tunisian demonstrations grew in a way we had not seen in the Arab region for decades.

Everyone could watch the events unfold on satellite TV. They had an electrifying effect, especially when the slogan, “The people want to bring down the regime” was raised.

When Tunisia’s president Ben Ali was forced to leave the country it had a huge impact on activists and young people in Egypt.

In Egypt there had been preparations for protests on 25 January against the police.

But people began to think that because of what was happening in Tunisia these could be bigger than usual.

When did you realise these protests were different to anything that had happened before?

We saw that very quickly. The demonstrations started at around noon. But the speed at which people started to join them, turning them into mass protests, shocked activists and the police.

The police were not prepared. For the first time in decades they become an ever smaller minority in front of a huge wave of people.

Everyone’s natural inclination was to go to Tahrir Square in Cairo. Nobody expected to reach it.

When the police began losing the battle we reached the square in a state of exhaustion. But there was also exhilaration and excitement, and meetings and discussion of what to do next.

What were the most significant moments of the first 18 days of the Revolution in Egypt?

Within two days Hosni Mubarak’s regime shut down internet and mobile communications. It wanted to make it difficult to build for even bigger demos on the Friday 28 January.

The real revolution started on that day. All the police stations in Cairo were burned down and the police as a force disintegrated.

The scene in Tahrir was almost surreal. You could see the ruling party’s headquarters on fire with smoke pouring from it and there were no police whatsoever.

The sheer numbers of people coming into Tahrir throughout the day was something I had never seen before, ever.

The second significant

event was on 2 February when police and thugs attempted to break into Tahrir. Pitched battles broke out throughout the night.

Different political tendencies organised structures together to defend the square. Many people died.

The third peak moment was when Hosni Mubarak made his last TV speech saying he wasn’t going to go.

People got ready to march on the presidential palace and

storm it.

Seeing the reaction to the speech was amazing. I’ll never forget the sight of hundreds of thousands of people waving their shoes and screaming at the screens.

The level of anger was matched only by the level of exhilaration on 11 February, when the vice-president finally announced Mubarak was leaving.

Celebrations went on through the night.

Looking back over the subsequent events, what were the weaknesses of the revolutionary movement?

The main mass political opposition organisations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, allied themselves with the ruling military junta—Scaf—which took power after Mubarak fell.

They wanted to push for a procedural democracy and stop the waves of the revolution. These waves kept bringing new sections of the oppressed into struggle as well as sparking more workers’ strikes.

The radical left did not have the mass organisation that could deepen the revolution.

We were too weak compared to the main reformist organisations, and the main currents of the left have been Stalinist. These wanted to limit the revolution.

This legacy made it very difficult for the radical left to build organisations that could challenge the Brotherhood and other reformist currents.

The ruling class has built an effective counter-revolution. How was this possible?

The Brotherhood kept making concessions to the military, even before coming to power. They wanted to try to portray themselves as responsible. They wanted to show they could control the masses and stem the revolt on the streets.

This allowed the police and military establishment to regroup and rebuild their forces.

They built a wave of fear through mobilising against the Brotherhood.

They claimed the Brotherhood was going to turn Egypt into a theocratic dictatorship and lead the country into chaos.

When Brotherhood supporter Mohamed Mursi ruled, state forces fuelled a sense of instability among the middle classes. Cars were stolen, there was kidnapping and mugging.

The military said it could bring a return to stability, jobs and normal life.

This resonated with wide sections of the middle class—especially as Mursi had nothing to show for the revolution.

His policies continued neoliberalism and opened the way to the counterrevolution.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is the face of the counter-revolution. Has he been able to crush all resistance?

Despite unprecedented repression there are still strikes and demonstrations that have that same spirit and slogans of the revolution.

I doubt the Sisi regime has the capacity to completely destroy that.

Sisi couldn’t have a new political machine. He

depends on the same corrupt businessmen, generals and old ruling party bureaucrats that led to the revolution in the first place.

There is no new economic project or political party.

And repression is back.

In November alone, 13 people were tortured to death in police stations around Egypt.

The police are returning to treating people with extreme forms of abuse. This was another trigger of the revolution.

The experience of ordinary people of revolution has not been extinguished. And the old regime has nothing to offer.

Socialists understand revolutions as a process, rather than a single event. What are your hopes for the future?

I’m very careful not to minimise defeat. But Egypt after the revolution will never be the same as Egypt before the revolution

It changed people’s hopes, aspirations, expectations and opens the possibility for a second revolution.

Because the other side know this they have to be more repressive than Mubarak ever was.

The ruling class is scared and is trying to crush the spirit of the revolution. Life under Sisi is unbearable and unsustainable—and will not continue.

So there is a lot to be hopeful about in the coming years.

We have to rebuild the revolutionary movement that has experienced temporary victory and defeat, and can learn the lessons of the revolution.

Egypt is the biggest and most important country in the region. What impact has the struggle there had in the wider region?

The positive impact of the success of the Egyptian revolution on the region was huge. You saw revolts in Bahrain, Syria, Libya and Yemen using the same slogans and organising.

The current success of the counter-revolution in Egypt has the same regional impact. But the positive effect of the revolutionary period on the experience of millions of Egyptians will not die easily.

READ MORE

● **The Egyptian Revolution: a political analysis and eyewitness account**

by Sameh Naguib, £3

● **Bread, Freedom, Social Justice—Workers and the Egyptian Revolution**

by Anne Alexander and Mostafa Bassiouny, £16.99

● **Egypt after the coup**

ISJ article by Phil Martleat

bit.ly/1JbDKaX

● **Revolution in the 21st century**

by Chris Harman, £8.63

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bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



Religion—is it just ‘the opium of the masses’?

For some, religion lies behind conflict and oppression. For others it’s a comfort. **Sadie Robinson** looks at the complex reality

RELIGION IS sometimes seen as the root of all the world’s problems. Western rulers tell us that religion, specifically Islam, threatens our “enlightened” way of life.

Of course they are utter hypocrites. These same rulers preside over the most violent and oppressive system in human history. There’s nothing progressive, rational or civilised about them.

In truth religion doesn’t cause oppression, it reflects it.

Organised religion arose with class societies. As Chris Harman put it, “Worshipping the gods became a way of society worshipping its own power, of people giving an alienated recognition to their own achievements.”

Religious ideas, like all ideas, have material roots. For instance, the Maurya Empire developed in Ancient India around 300 years BC.

As agriculture developed, cows became valuable as people relied on them for ploughing the land. Harman explained, “Out of this emerged the seemingly irrational veneration of the cow which characterises modern Hinduism.”

Ambiguous

Those at the top try to legitimise their rule with religious ideas. But because religion is ambiguous and contradictory, different social forces use it for different ends.

So slaveowners in the US used Christianity to justify oppression of slaves. But the slaves also looked to religion—for comfort and as a way of showing defiance.

Black churches campaigned against apartheid in South Africa while the Dutch Reformed Church there supported it.

Today Islam is the official ideology of several regimes that back the West, such as Saudi Arabia. But it has also



Religion—is it just ‘the opium of the masses’?



PEOPLE OF all religions and none joined Palestine solidarity protests in 2014
PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

BACK STORY

Karl Marx said religion was the ‘opium of the people’.

● Our rulers sometimes use religion to justify the status quo.

● But religion can also inspire people to resist and fight back

● That’s because religion is a reflection of oppression, not its cause

● Marx also called religion “the heart of a heartless world” and “the sigh of the oppressed.”

inspired resistance against the West.

The Islamist group Hamas has organised resistance to the Israeli seige on Gaza.

The Bible and the Quran include sections that justify class division while other passages sound hostile to the rich. But soundbites that suggest gods look kindly on the poor can soothe people while discouraging resistance. And they don’t question why rich and poor exist in the first place.

Religion can offer explanation and comfort in a hostile world

Religion can seem to offer explanation and comfort in an irrational, hostile world. It promises a happy afterlife if we follow certain rules.

As Karl Marx put it, “Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering.

“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world.”

Marxists are atheists. But we defend people’s right to practice religion and stand against any persecution of people on religious grounds.

Divisions

At the same time religious ideas obscure a real understanding of how the world works. They can mask class divisions. And they can be used to contain struggle.

So we also fight to offer an alternative explanation of the world that points to how we can change it.

Socialists will fight alongside anyone who wants to see a better world—whatever their religious beliefs.

We want a world that truly meets the needs of everyone and isn’t based on oppression and exploitation. In such a world, the need for religious ideas would melt away.

As Marx wrote, “To abolish religion as the illusory happiness of the people is to demand their real happiness.

“The demand to give up illusions about the existing affairs is the demand to give up a state of affairs that needs illusions.”

A Revolutionary Socialist flag in Egypt

NEW
PAMPHLET
OUT NOW

Jeremy Corbyn's extraordinary victory as Labour leader has given hope to socialists and a renewed sense of confidence. It has boosted everyone on the left.

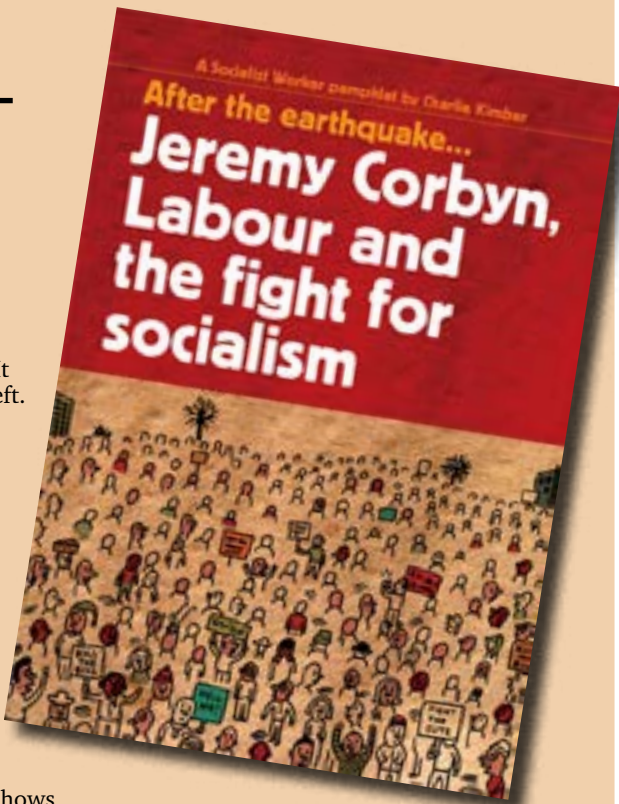
But how can we make the most of this situation?

In this pamphlet Charlie Kimber looks at the roots of Corbyn's triumph, puts it in the context of Labour's history over the last hundred years and examines the potential for further successes—and the obstacles in Corbyn's path.

The ferocious resistance to Corbyn from the Tories, their tame media and some inside the Labour Party shows how much the establishment fears the message that change is possible.

After the Earthquake, Jeremy Corbyn, Labour and the Fight for Socialism is for everyone who rejoiced at Corbyn's success and wants to carry it through.

It's for all those who want a world where people come before profit—whether they are in the Labour Party or not.



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The Appeal will officially close this weekend, but there is still plenty of time to make a final donation.



Photo: The Weekly Bull @ Flickr

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Bigotry at the heart of Thatcher's government

Newly released 30 year old government documents reveal a world of racism and scheming from Cameron's pals. **Simon Basketter** unearths the facts

DOCUMENTS released last month provide a glimpse into the warped thinking of the Tories.

Top Tory Oliver Letwin is David Cameron's key policy adviser.

A memo to Margaret Thatcher was released last month by the National Archives under the 30-year rule. In it, Letwin and Hartley Booth MP slammed plans for a government scheme to invest in black business.

Letwin once wrote, "One of the things Eton taught me was not to be in any way embarrassed about being poor. Money wasn't a basis upon which anything was judged." He has been a central Tory figure ever since.

Letwin advised Thatcher against setting up a communities programme to combat inner-city problems because it would only "subsidise Rastafarian arts and crafts workshops".

He argued, "Riots, criminality and social disintegration are caused solely by individual characters and attitudes. So long as bad moral attitudes remain, all efforts to improve the inner cities will founder."

He also proclaimed, "Lower-class white people lived for years in

appalling slums without a breakdown of public order".

The paper said, "Entrepreneurs will set up in the disco and drug trade. Refurbished blocks will decay through vandalism combined with neglect and people will graduate from training or employment programmes into unemployment or crime."

The paper was in response to the Broadwater Farm riot in Tottenham, north London. The riot followed the death of Cynthia Jarrett during a police raid.

Prejudices

The Tories, despite their prejudices, were reluctantly considering putting some limited investment into poor areas. Letwin was against this.

But the Tories wanted to co-opt a layer of "responsible" black leadership because they were afraid.

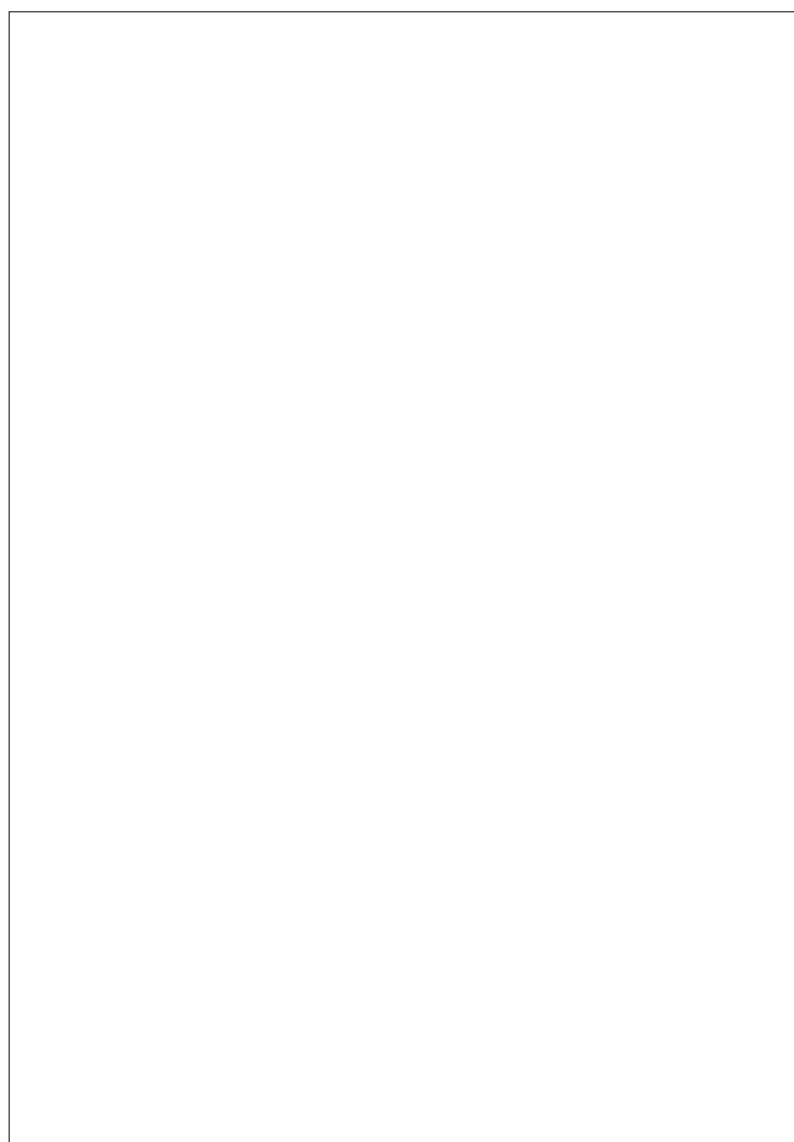
Broadwater farm came a week after the shooting of Cherry Groce had sparked a riot in Brixton, south London. It was the year of the Miners' Strike. Earlier in the decade a series of riots had shook the Tories in 1981.

Letwin wasn't the only one with racist views. The cops told Thatcher that rioters in Tottenham were building napalm bombs, according to papers from 1985.

Officers said a milk float had been stolen in the area, and that they feared the empty milk bottles would be used as grenades.

Police sources also cited local chemists who warned that "the ingredients of napalm... have been supplied to individuals in the Tottenham area".

Margaret Thatcher replied that the supposed revelations were "disturbing". No napalm ever emerged.



OLIVER LETWIN expressed racist views

The cops told Thatcher that rioters were building napalm bombs

Secrets are kept hidden

JUST 58 documents were released via the National Archives at the end of the year compared to 500 last year.

Ministerial papers on subjects that had been expected to be made available to the public were not.

These included papers on the SAS shootings in Gibraltar, the Spycatcher intelligence scandal, and the Lockerbie bombing in 1988.

Under the Public Records



Files stay locked away

Act, government departments have to transfer files to the Archives or explain why they remain classified.

In the past, this had to happen before they were 30 years old, but this is being reduced to 20 years.

There are also to be monthly releases of documents.

But more frequent releases do not mean more openness if important files involving the actions of the state remain hidden.

Tory PM against sex ed

MARGARET THATCHER nearly vetoed an Aids awareness campaign because it would inform young people about "practices they never knew about".

Cabinet papers from 1986 show she was worried about a section on "risky sex".

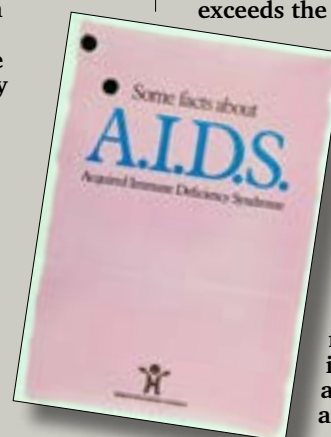
"I remain against certain parts of this advertisement," she said.

"I think the anxiety on the part of parents

and many teenagers who would never be in danger from Aids exceeds the good it may do...

"adverts where every young person will read and hear of practices they never knew about will do harm."

Health secretary Norman Fowler eventually replaced a section in an advert on anal sex with a single line.



Margaret Thatcher asked the Irish prime minister what the reaction would be if the British government bombed the Irish town of Dundalk.

She met Garret FitzGerald shortly after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.

She also suggested setting up a new police force to be called the "B Specials".

The B Specials had been a notorious and hated paramilitary police reserve which had been abolished in 1970.

Dundalk was bombed by British backed Loyalist paramilitaries in 1975.

Whether Thatcher was joking, making threats, merely ignorant or all three is not clear from the documents.

Margaret Thatcher

POLICY adviser David Willetts told Margaret Thatcher in January 1986 that Scotland was "the only juicy target" for further cuts. He argued that inflicting cuts on Scotland would win favour with "envious" people in the north of England.

"Your economic policies stop at the English border," he said.

"The position of the Conservative party in Scotland is so bad that it might not deteriorate any further."

"And the envious north of England might even welcome an attack on the pampered Scots over the border."

Willetts went on to be a minister in the last government.

David Willetts

IN BRIEF

Occupation ends over campus cuts

STUDENT PROTESTERS at the Cass School of Arts and Design in east London ended their occupation of a gallery space last month.

The students are fighting plans to close the campus, which is part of London Met University, and merge it with a campus in north London.

They have promised to fight on against the closure.

Teesside work to rule at housing firm

MORE THAN 300 workers in the Unite union struck at Teesside housing association group Thirteen last month.

Workers had been told to sign up to new conditions or face the sack. A work to rule and overtime ban continued after the strike. Another strike could follow this month.

Traffic wardens vote for pay deal

TRAFFIC WARDENS working for outsourcing giant NSL in Brighton and Hove have voted to accept a new two-year pay deal raising their basic rate from £7.85 to £8.87 an hour.

The GMB union members struck for four days at the beginning of December. They were due to walk out for three days over Christmas, but the action was called off after bosses made a new offer.

Fire bosses face action over job cuts

THE firefighters' FBU union is in dispute with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority's plan to slash a quarter of control operators, who handle emergency calls, in the region.

The FBU warned that it would ballot for industrial action if the authority had not withdrawn the planned cuts by Wednesday of this week.

Ballot end could bring library strike

A STRIKE ballot of library workers in Lambeth, south London, was set to end on Tuesday of this week.

They are fighting cuts to libraries implemented by the Labour-run council.

The Unison union members walked out unofficially in November last year and shut the borough's ten libraries for the day.

Boycott forces back Home Office bosses

HOME OFFICE interpreters have forced the Tories to back away from a planned pay cut.

The interpreters, who are self employed, said they would refuse to take accept Home Office assignments in response to plans to cut their hourly rates.

The planned boycott forced the Home Office to defer the pay cut and negotiate with the interpreters.

POST WORKERS

Fife posties fight the sack

by NICK CLARK

POSTAL WORKERS in Cupar, Fife, walked out last month to defend a sacked colleague.

The CWU union members demand the reinstatement of David Mitchell, who was sacked in 2014 after bosses accused him of stealing mail.

An employment tribunal found there was insufficient evidence and ordered his reinstatement.

But bosses refused, saying they would not "under any

circumstances" give David his job back.

David has strong support from his workmates and the public.

Strikers presented him with a collection of £1,200. Residents added to the collection on the picket line.

●Messages of support to blythpoolman@btinternet.com
Donations to Brian Philbin, CWU Area Rep, David Mitchell Fund, Union Room, Royal Mail Dunfermline Delivery Office, Woodmill Rd, Dunfermline, Fife



ON THE picket line in Cupar in defence of David Mitchell last month

PICTURE: BILL MAIR

EDUCATION

First strike in 30 years as teachers fight cuts

SECONDARY school teachers at Labour-run West Dunbartonshire Council in Scotland were set to strike on Tuesday of next week. They are fighting over a restructure of management positions in five secondary schools.

The action will be the first such strike in 30 years.

The council proposals, part of £600,000 cuts, have sparked a revolt as they will remove some deputy head teachers,

and cut principal teachers and pastoral care staff.

The EIS union fears the council's cost-cutting will increase workloads, which are already unbearable.

Walkout

Nearly 90 percent of EIS union members voted to strike on a 61 percent turnout. Teachers were set to follow up the walkout with a work to rule.

Meanwhile, in a

consultative ballot, Scottish secondary teachers in the EIS have voted by 93 percent for industrial action over excessive workloads due to a new qualifications system. The turnout was 46 percent.

An EIS executive meeting early this month could announce a formal ballot for strikes.

●Send solidarity messages to West Dunbartonshire teachers westdunbartonshire@eis.org.uk

SCHOOLS ROUND-UP

■NUT UNION members at Tech City College in north London could hold further walkouts in a dispute over pay and conditions.

The workers held two strikes last month after voting unanimously for strikes. But school bosses have failed to reach an agreement with workers.

Workers say they face "limitless observations" and are being unfairly blamed for problems. Teachers also say that four workers have been "unfairly" denied pay progression.

The Aspirations Academies Trust runs the

free school, which was formerly STEM 6.

●Send messages of support to nut@islingtonteachers.org.uk

■TEACHERS AT a school in Somerset have voted for strikes over claims of bullying and harassment.

The NUT union also has concerns about workloads, maternity rights and lack of support for newly-qualified teachers at the Academy of Trinity School. The Dove Family Trust runs the school.

A Freedom of Information request by the NUT found that 20 teachers have left the school in the past

three years. The NUT said a further three have left since the request was made, including two who were sacked after they took out a grievance.

■TEACHERS AT Listerdale Primary School in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, could stage more strikes after talks with bosses broke down last month.

The NUT union members have already taken five days of strikes. They are in dispute with the school's ruling Children's Academy Trust over the suspension of head teacher Craig Roberts.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Joint colleges walkout is on the horizon

COLLEGE WORKERS across two unions, the UCU and Unison, could strike together over pay on 2 March.

The UCU's further education committee met last month and agreed to propose the date for a joint strike.

The bosses' Association of Colleges (AoC) is to hold a London conference on the day. The union plans to lobby it.

The AoC recommends a 0 percent pay deal this year. College workers in Unison

will ballot over pay this month.

Unison is recommending that workers including technicians, library staff, catering, security, support staff, vote to strike.

■LONDON Region UCU has initiated a conference on Defending Further and Adult Education. It is backed by UCU, NUS and professional education groups.

The conference takes place on Saturday 5 March at the Soas university

in central London.

●Go to bit.ly/1Z1C54n for more details or email info@natecla.org.uk

■A SECOND Convention for Higher Education will take place on Saturday 27 February at the University College London.

University workers and students will discuss the government's Higher Education Green Paper and resistance to it.

●To book a place go to bit.ly/1muwUsq

DEATH IN CUSTODY

Cops face fury at meeting

by BRIAN RICHARDSON

MORE THAN 250 people filled Tottenham Town Hall last month for a meeting to demand answers following another fatal police shooting in north London.

Local MP David Lammy felt obliged to begin proceedings by lecturing the media about misleading reports that sought to demonise Jermaine Baker.

Initial reports had repeatedly suggested that Jermaine Baker was part of a gang poised to attack a prison van to release two prisoners.

At the meeting the Metropolitan Police and Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) were on the defensive.

Haringey borough commander Victor Olisa admitted that there was no evidence that Jermaine was a gang member.

IPCC commissioner Cindy Butts announced that a "homicide inquiry" into the killing has been launched and that a police officer has been interviewed under caution.



Jermaine Baker

The meeting erupted as the Met's assistant commissioner, Helen King, tried to explain why patrol officers are still not obliged to wear body cameras.

Two years have now passed since Met commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe indicated that his staff would begin a trial of the equipment in the aftermath of the inquest into Mark Duggan's killing less than 1.5 miles away.

The meeting ended with furious demands for all the officers involved to be charged under the doctrine of joint enterprise which allows for two or more people to be charged with a crime.

ANTI-RACISM

No to the Nazis in Dover

ANTI-RACISTS are organising to mobilise against the Nazis in Dover.

The Nazi National Front plans to march in Dover on Saturday 30 January, along with other Nazi groups.

The Kent Anti Racism Network has called a

counter-demonstration, which is backed by Unite Against Fascism and a number of trade union branches.

●Join the protest—assemble at 11am, Saturday 30 January, Market Square, Dover. Go to uaf.org.uk for more information

MEDIA WORKERS

JOURNALISTS AT five local newspapers owned by Trinity Mirror have voted to strike against management plans to introduce new targets.

Bosses at Trinity Mirror want to impose targets aimed at increasing the number of hits each online article gets. Workers voted to strike at the Daily Post in Wales, Liverpool Echo, Coventry Telegraph, Birmingham Post and Mail, and the Newcastle Chronicle.

REFUSE WORKERS

THE GMB union is balloting recycling workers in Sheffield for strikes as part of a longrunning dispute over pay, health and safety, and alleged management bullying.

The workers are employed by the Green Company, a subcontractor for outsourcing giant Veolia.

Veolia manages environmental services for the Labour-run Sheffield City Council.

UNISON ELECTION

'Malpractice' claim clouds Prentis win

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

THE UNISON union announced last month that incumbent general secretary Dave Prentis was re-elected. He won almost half the vote to serve a fourth term as the union's head.

But the result is not a vote of confidence in Prentis.

Turnout was down on the previous election—at less than 10 percent—and Prentis received fewer votes and fewer nominations.

Heather Wakefield, national officer for local government, came second with 26.4 percent of the vote.

At 24.2 percent, the left's share of the vote was down on the 2010 election. Roger Bannister came third with 12.6 percent and John Burgess fourth with 11.6 percent.

Burgess fought a hard campaign and used it to support workers' struggles and local campaigns.

But divisions on the left helped Prentis. Activists must redouble their efforts to fight for a united left in Unison—and for a real fight against austerity.

Nick Ruff, Kirklees Unison branch chair, blamed the low turnout on "the way the union has been run".



DAVE PRENTIS promised to smash the pay freeze—but didn't

PICTURE: UNISON

"There is no question about members' resilience to fight," he said. "But there are questions to ask about the disgracefully low turnout."

Many members were furious at the result being announced.

Allegations of widespread malpractice, potentially implicating Prentis, came after his supporters were caught breaking union election rules on tape.

Linda Perks, Unison's Greater London regional secretary, instructed paid staff to campaign for Prentis.

She also relayed thanks from Prentis for the work staff did getting him nominations.

Karen Reissmann, a Unison national executive committee (NEC) member, said, "How can the union declare an election result when an investigation into it is still ongoing?"

Over a third of the union's NEC signed an open letter calling for the suspension of Prentis and the London regional management team.

The letter also demanded an independent investigation.

Workers spoke in a personal capacity.

Stand Up to the Tories—Stand Up for Democracy in Unison. Sat 16 Jan, 1.30-5pm, Carrs Lane Conference Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham B4 7SX

TRANSPORT WORKERS



Striking Caledonian Sleeper rail workers

PICTURE: RMT

Workers stage safety strike

RMT UNION members on the Caledonian Sleeper train service between London and Scotland struck for 48 hours just before Christmas last year.

The workers were striking over operator Serco's failure to address a number of defects contained within the rolling stock.

The union said some defects are potentially dangerous to staff and passengers on a service that

is unreliable and riddled with health, safety and welfare issues.

It emerged during the strike that Serco would be reimbursed around £300,000 in lost profits by the Scottish government under contract rules.

It was also revealed that £5 million was blown on consultancy and tendering costs before the contract was awarded to Serco in March last year.

DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY

STAFF WORKING for outsourcing firm Interserve on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) in London have won a 75p an hour wage increase.

The rise followed a campaign of industrial action with the threat of more.

Cleaning supervisors and security staff are among those set to receive the rise, backdated to April last year.

The workers are members of the RMT union.

Meanwhile the union has suspended the first two rounds of strikes involving DLR staff, set for Monday and Wednesday of next week.

The move followed progress in talks.

The union has said that strikes set for February and March are still on.

NORTHERN RAIL

Leeds action to defend pay

by STEVE JOHNSTON

PICKETS AND protesters leafleted Leeds commuters on Monday of this week.

RMT union members working for Northern Rail Customer Relations were on strike after a 95 percent vote for action.

Their dispute, over regrading, was sparked after a "market forces review" that attacked wage rates.

Striker Andy explained, "We feel it was morally wrong to cut wages by up to £5,000 for workers doing the same job."

"They thought we were an easy touch but we are determined to resist."

Workers plan further strikes.

Local "action for rail" protesters, who were leafleting against fare rises, job cuts and privatisation, supported the strikers.

BUS DRIVERS

BUS DRIVERS in south west London have reacted strongly against Wandsworth Council's refusal to provide toilet facilities at the end of the Roehampton routes.

More than 20 drivers supported by local anti-austerity campaigners held a lively town hall picket demanding action.

The Unite union has been calling for action over the issue for four years.

Drivers, female and

male, have to use a public house or the bushes.

John Clossick

■ BUS DRIVERS in Medway, Kent, have voted to end their dispute over new timetables.

The Unite union members warned that Arriva bosses' new timetables were unworkable and unsafe.

Negotiations amended the timetables. Workers say they will revisit the issue in March and could strike again.

STEEL WORKERS

'Constructive' unions aid steel bosses' blackmail

THREATS OF closure are being used to blackmail steel workers in Scunthorpe into accepting attacks on their pay, pensions and jobs.

Owner Tata wants to sell the Scunthorpe-centred "long products" division and said it could close the plant if it doesn't find a buyer.

Investment firm Greybull said it could buy the plant and invest £400 million—if certain "reforms" are made.

These include scrapping the final salary pension scheme workers fought last year to defend, and cutting overtime pay and bonuses.

They also include up to 500 more job losses.

Unions have opened the

door to bosses' blackmail by framing the steel jobs crisis in terms of how to make the industry competitive.

As a Greybull spokesperson said, "The trade unions involved have to date been most constructive."

This "constructive" approach puts the bosses in a position to make demands.

Tata used the threat of closure to demand the Environment Agency let it off measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

It has now been given "breathing space" until at least 2024 on cost grounds.

Taking bosses on, not pandering to them, can defend jobs and the planet.

MUSEUM WORKERS

Museum strike in Scotland wins support for workers

by STEVE WEST

PCS UNION members at the National Museum of Scotland struck on 26 and 27 December as part of a three-year dispute.

The dispute began when management withdrew a weekend working allowance for staff employed since 1 January 2011.

These staff, already among the lowest paid at the museum, are now paid 20 percent less than their colleagues for doing the same job.

Members remain determined to defeat this two-tier pay system.

They have continued their action following a breakdown in talks.

Passersby showed support for picketing strikers during

last month's walkout.

Sarah Boyack MSP also visited picket lines.

The action meant that management could only open one floor out of three.

Send messages of support to alanb@pcs.org.uk

Follow the campaign on Twitter and use the hashtag #ScotFairPay

Make a donation to the branch hardship fund. Cheques should be payable to "PCS National Museum of Scotland Welfare Fund" and send to Andy McDougall, Library Assistant, National Museums Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1JF.

Bank transfers can be made as follows—account name—PCS National Museum of Scotland Welfare Fund, sort code 608310, account number 203546608

BACK STRIKES TO DEFEND NHS

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

JUNIOR DOCTORS' strikes against new contracts are back on, the British Medical Association (BMA) announced on Monday of this week.

They are set to provide only "emergency care" for 24 hours from 8am on Tuesday of next week and for 48 hours from 8am on Tuesday 26 January.

A "full withdrawal of labour" is set for Wednesday 10 February.

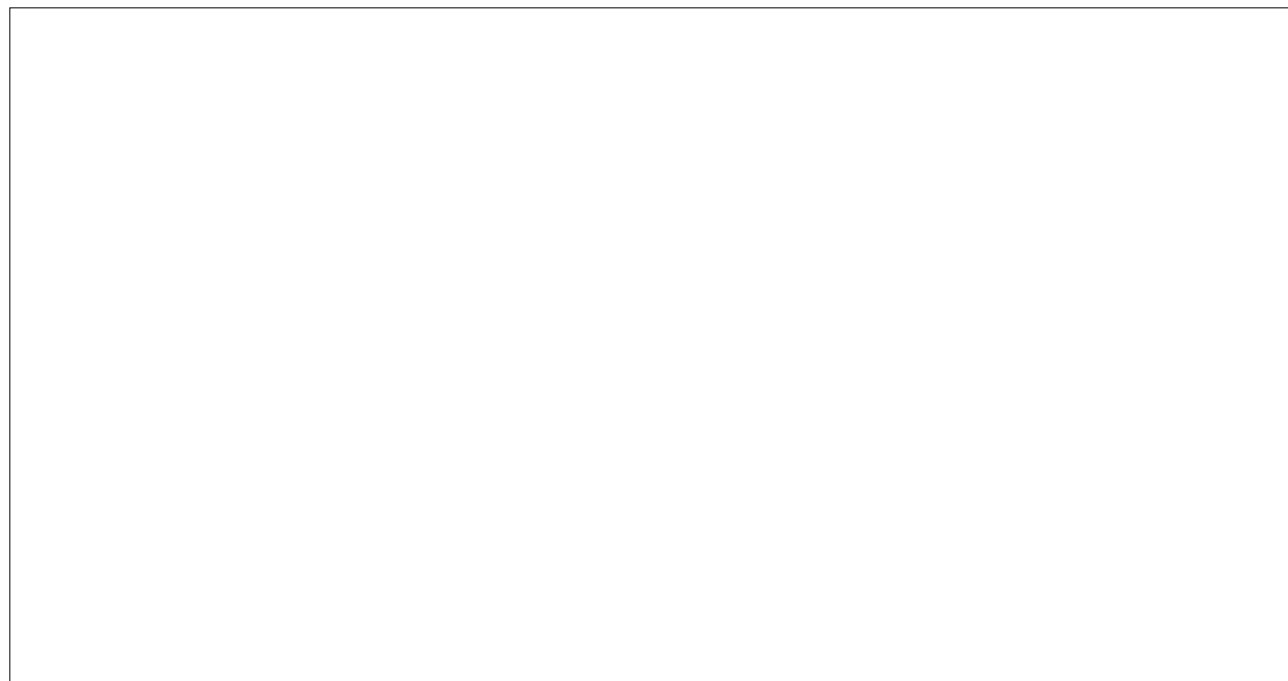
This deepens the political crisis facing Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Junior doctors are fighting plans to impose new contracts that attack terms and conditions—and put safety at risk.

The BMA suspended strikes last month for talks. But the Tories refuse to budge on any key issues.

The right wing press is already pumping out propaganda about "greedy" doctors. And Hunt claimed the main sticking point was weekend pay.

Nicki, a junior doctor in



JUNIOR DOCTORS are demanding safeguards on working long hours to defend patient safety

east London, told Socialist Worker, "The main sticking point is safeguards on hours—if the government can't move on that we have to strike."

Junior doctors already work long hours, but the new

contracts would remove mandatory safeguards introduced in the 1990s amid fears for patient safety.

"This is about us making sure we can deliver patient care—we can't accept a contract that's not safe," she said.

Hunt claims the new contracts are part of improving patient care by bringing in "seven day working".

In reality, most NHS services already run seven days a week.

The Tories want to smash

workers' pay and terms and conditions to soften up the NHS for privatisation.

Hunt offered them an 11 percent rise on "plain hours" last year.

But most junior doctors rely on unsocial hours pay for

half of their take-home pay—so it would still amount to up to a 30 percent cut.

After the BMA suspended the December walkouts the Tories announced plans to scrap NHS bursaries and replace them with loans.

But these attacks could fuel growing resistance from health workers.

Nicki said, "The feeling among junior doctors is that there's an all-out assault on the NHS—whether that's doctors or other health workers."

The BMA's announcement comes as students are preparing to march against bursary cuts (see below).

"Lots of junior doctors are planning to march in solidarity with the student nurses," said Nicki. "We're showing this is part of a united fight."

Yannis Gourtsoyannis sits on the BMA's junior doctors' committee. He told Socialist Worker, "We live in times of austerity and the government feels compelled to attack NHS workers."

"But people across the NHS are waking up to their political agenda—there's no doubt that our resistance can make them fail in 2016."

Student fightback over bursaries can fuel united struggle against Tories

ANGER AT the Tory assault on the NHS is spreading as health care students and their supporters were set to march in central London this Saturday.

Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt plans to axe bursaries for student nurses, midwives, occupational therapists and others.

But the campaign to defend them is gaining momentum and support from other health workers.

Danielle is a student nurse in London and one of the main organisers.

She told Socialist Worker, "They're trying to privatise the NHS and to drive it into the ground."

"If we don't fight now,

we'll lose the NHS."

Cuts and privatisation have pushed the health service into crisis.

New rules force hospitals to pay interest on loans used for day to day running costs. Interest payments are projected to double to £150 million in the coming year.

Deficit

The NHS already faces its largest black hole of £2.2 billion.

Three quarters of NHS trusts ended 2015 deep in deficit with acute trusts, which run major hospitals, trebling their deficits to £958 million in 2014-15.

National Audit Office chief Amyas Morse said

that "running a deficit seems to have become normal practice".

Now the Tories are making



It's the same fight

health workers and patients pay for their disastrous policies.

Hunt boasted that a "clampdown" on a "rip-off staffing agencies" has saved £248 million.

But the bill is still mounting as poverty pay and rocketing workloads are pushing health workers out of the NHS.

Danielle said, "The problem is not the training places—it's the underfunding and demoralisation."

In the crisis-ridden Barts Health NHS Trust in east London there's a shortage of 1,200 nurses.

"When you're on placement you can see how it's changing and the pressure that health workers are under."

"As a student I have breaks, but nurses don't because they want to do the best for their patients," she explained.

"That not fair on them."

Shortages

Hunt has tried to justify this latest attack by claiming it will fund a further 10,000 training places.

But Danielle said, "Nurses also struggle to accommodate us for training because of the shortages and my university is already

running at full capacity.

"How will they accommodate another 10,000?"

But these attacks are fuelling a real possibility of a united fight to defend the NHS and force Hunt out.

Danielle said, "We're getting lots of support and the junior doctors have really supported us—we're definitely in this together."

Junior doctor Yannis Gourtsoyannis said, "This really shows how the Tories are disaffecting the NHS workforce—whether that's over unsocial hours pay or bursaries."

"Their fight is our fight—and our fight is their fight."